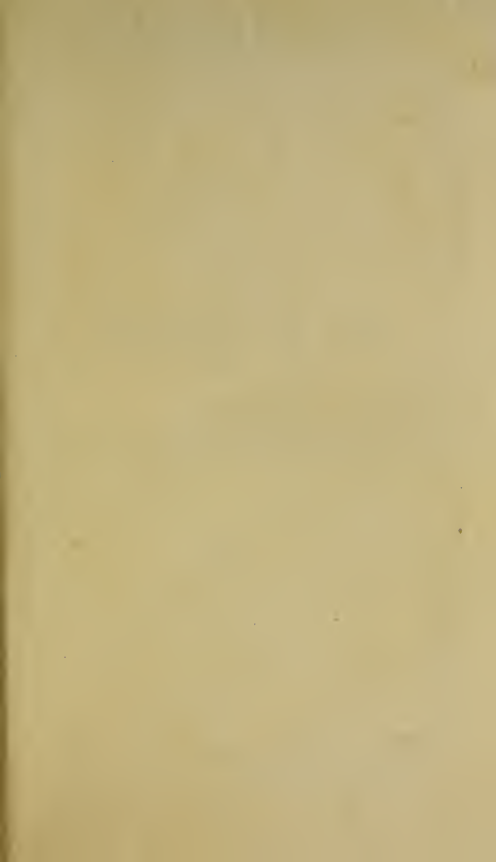






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STORIES OF THE  
SOUTH SEAS

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# STORIES OF THE SOUTH SEAS

CHOSEN BY  
E. C. PARNWELL



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Honolulu society, introducing electric trams and wireless, comes less within the category than a Queensland mining story of the old days, or some trifling romance between a European trader and a Hawaiian girl. The essential elements of typical South Sea stories appear to be, first, the region (with uncertain boundaries); second, adventure of one kind or another; third, freedom from conventionality, or an unusualness according to present-day 'civilized' ideas. Undoubtedly this freedom from formality constitutes much of the glamour of the South Seas, and in it lies the real charm of South Sea literature.

Frankly, then, this is a book of adventure stories, and whoever scorns such things must lay it down. But if the scrupulous reader will forbear, he will find in the examples given something of interest beyond the adventurous episodes themselves.

Tales of the Pacific have ancient origin. Ever since Polynesians and Melanesians set out from their mythical home, Hawaiki <sup>1</sup> (the land of the setting sun), and first launched their canoes on the Western Pacific, their exploits and lore were handed down from generation to generation in story and song, until recorded by European explorers. Gradually the primitive explorers extended their voyages eastwards, populating the islands as they went: the Polynesians, far outstripping the Melanesians, came at long last to Easter Island itself.

<sup>1</sup> Of which several place-names in the Pacific are reminiscent.

From these adventurers were derived the Maoris, who in a famous fleet of canoes from the Cook Islands and the Society Islands reached New Zealand and settled there several centuries before any European set eyes on the land. A few of the legends told by their descendants to Sir George Grey, and collected in his *Polynesian Mythology*, are here given. His casual, colloquial style seems well fitted to his subject, and brings the old-time Maori very clearly before our eyes.

The advent of Europeans began a new phase in the life of the native races of the Pacific. From that moment story writers had scope enough for their art in imagining and describing relations between the natives and the European sailors, traders, settlers, missionaries, and other people who came to disturb their secluded—albeit hardly peaceful—life. In Australia and New Zealand mere existence was sufficiently adventurous to provide thrilling stories of colonists' experiences in developing new lands half a world from Europe. Altogether, Oceania has been a happy hunting-ground for the writer of fiction; and yet Lord Pembroke, commenting on South Sea literature (in introducing Louis Becke's work in 1894), stated his opinion that as a rule the men who knew the Pacific didn't write, and the men who wrote didn't know.

An attempt has been made to embody in this selection the true spirit of the South Seas, as conveyed to us by those who did know and write (both before and after Lord Pembroke's remark); and

thus to perpetuate it against the time when the advance of education and other westernizing influences will have completely changed traditional South Sea life.

Within one cover such a selection cannot be representative, let alone exhaustive, and considerations of length and literary quality as well as of matter have ruled out many attractive stories. The space occupied by R. L. Stevenson in this volume does not of course correspond with his importance in South Sea literature. A reason for not including more of his work is that any reader interested in this subject knows or should aim to know intimately the work of the great 'teller of tales', which is readily available in popular editions.

A few self-contained extracts (not short stories as we speak of them to-day), dealing in dramatic fashion with interesting incidents, have been included for their merit, but travel literature generally has not been drawn upon. Valuable though it is for 'local colour' it hardly falls within the scope of this selection.

I am indebted to Mr. Kenneth Sisam for valuable suggestions, and to the following for leave to include copyright pieces:

Messrs. Benn (Louis Becke's 'The Great Crushing at Mount Sugar-bag' and 'The Chilian Blue-jacket'); the Trustees of the Estate of the late Joseph Conrad ('The Secret Sharer'); Messrs. Heath & Co. and Messrs. Thornton Butterworth Ltd. (John Russell's 'The Fourth Man'); Messrs.



Hutchinson (Beatrice Grimshaw's 'Behind the Ranges' and Mr. de Vere Stacpöole's 'Maru'); Miss G. B. Lancaster ('The Story of Wi'); Mrs. Jack London and Messrs. Mills & Boon (Jack London's 'The Seed of McCoy' and 'The House of Mapuhi'); Mr. W. Somerset Maugham and Messrs. Heinemann ('Red'); Mr. John Murray (Frank Bullen's 'The Whale in the Cave'); Mr. Lloyd Osbourne and Messrs. Chatto & Windus ('The Isle of Voices', from R. L. Stevenson's *Island Nights' Entertainments*); Mr. Lloyd Osbourne and Messrs. Heinemann ('A Son of Empire' and 'The Devil's White Man').

E. C. PARNWELL



# WOODES ROGERS

d. 1732

## AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF 'ROBINSON CRUSOE'

*[On the 15th June 1708 two ships sailed from Bristol. They were the Duke, of 300 tons, under the command of Captain Woodes Rogers, and the Duchess, of 270 tons. Both ships had commissions from 'his Royal Highness Prince George of Denmark, Lord High Admiral of England, to cruise on the coasts of Peru and Mexico, in the South Seas, against his Majesty's enemies, the French and the Spaniards, and to act jointly, as belonging to the same owners, merchants in Bristol'.*

*The following is an extract from Captain Woodes Rogers' account of the rescue of Alexander Selkirk from the island of Juan Fernandez. It is interesting to note that 'Friday' does not appear in this narrative.]*

WE continued our voyage, coasting very far to the south, where we endured great cold, which affected our men extremely, insomuch that a third part of both ships' companies fell sick; and this induced us to bear away for the island of Juan Fernandez; which we, however, did not find very easily, on account of its being laid down differently in all the charts; and Captain Dampier was likewise a good deal at a loss, though he had been here so often, and though he had a map of the island in his head, that agreed exactly with the country when we came to see it: which ought to induce sea-officers to prefer what is properly their business to idle amusements;

since, with all this knowledge, we were forced to make the mainland of Chile in order to find this island, and did not strike it without difficulty at last.

On February 1st, 1709, we came before that island [Juan Fernandez], having had a good observation the day before, and found our latitude to be 34 degrees 10 minutes south. In the afternoon we hoisted out our pinnace; and Captain Dover, with the boat's crew, went in her to go ashore, though we could not be less than four leagues off. As soon as the pinnace was gone I went on board the *Duchess*, who admired our boat attempting going ashore at that distance from land. It was against my inclination; but, to oblige Captain Dover, I let her go: as soon as it was dark we saw a light ashore. Our boat was then about a league from the island, and bore away for the ships as soon as she saw the lights: we put our lights aboard for the boat, though some were of opinion, the lights we saw were our boat's lights: but, as night came on, it appeared too large for that: we fired our quarter-deck gun, and several muskets, showing lights in our mizen and fore-shrouds, that our boat might find us whilst we were in the lee of the island: about two in the morning our boat came on board, having been two hours on the *Duchess*, that took them up astern of us; we were glad they got well off, because it began to blow. We were all convinced the light was on the shore, and designed to make our ships ready to engage, believing them to be French ships at anchor, and we must either fight them, or want water. All this stir and apprehension arose, as we afterwards found, from one poor naked man, who passed in our imagination, at present, for a Spanish garrison, or a crew of pirates. While we were under these apprehensions we stood on the backside of the island, in order to fall in with the southerly wind, till we were past the island; and then we came

back to it again, and ran close aboard the land that begins to make the north-east side. We still continued to reason upon this matter; and it is in a manner incredible what strange notions many of our people entertained from the sight of the fire upon the island. It served, however, to show people's tempers and spirits; and we were able to give a tolerable guess how our men would behave in case there really were any enemies upon the island. The flaws came heavy off the shore, and we were forced to reef our top-sails when we opened the middle bay, where we expected to have found our enemy; but saw all clear, and no ships, nor the other bay next the north-east end. These two bays are all that ships ride in, which recruit on this island; but the middle bay is by much the best. We guessed there had been ships there, but that they were gone on sight of us. We sent our yawl ashore about noon, with Captain Dover, Mr. Fry, and six men, all armed: meanwhile we and the *Duchess* kept turning to get in, and such heavy flaws came off the land that we were forced to let go our top-sail sheet, keeping all hands to stand by our sails, for fear of the winds carrying them away: but when the flaws had gone, we had little or no wind. These flaws proceeded from the land, which is very high in the middle of the island. Our boat did not return; we sent our pinnace with the men armed, to see what was the occasion of the yawl's stay; for we were afraid that the Spaniards had a garrison there, and might have seized them. We put out a signal for our boat, and the *Duchess* showed a French ensign. Immediately our pinnace returned from the shore, and brought abundance of cray-fish, with a man clothed in goatskins, who looked wilder than the first owners of them. He had been on the island four years and four months, being left there by Captain Stradling in the *Cinque-ports*; his name was

Alexander Selkirk, a Scotchman, who had been master of the *Cinque-ports*, a ship that came here last with Captain Dampier, who told me that this was the best man in her. I immediately agreed with him to be a mate on board our ship: it was he that made the fire last night when he saw our ships, which he judged to be English. During his stay here he saw several ships pass by, but only two came into anchor: as he went to view them he found them to be Spaniards, and retired from them; upon which they shot at him: had they been French he would have submitted; but chose to risk his dying alone on the island, rather than fall into the hands of Spaniards in these parts; because he apprehended they would murder him, or make a slave of him in the mines; for he feared they would spare no stranger that might be capable of discovering the South Seas. The Spaniards had landed before he knew what they were; and they came so near him that he had much ado to escape; for they not only shot at him, but pursued him to the woods, where he climbed to the top of a tree. They killed several goats just by, but went off again without discovering him. He told us that he was born at Largo, in the county of Fife, in Scotland, and was bred a sailor from his youth. The reason of his being left here was a difference between him and his captain; which, together with the ship's being leaky, made him willing rather to stay here than go along with him at first; and when he was at last willing to go, the captain would not receive him. He had been at the island before to wood and water, when two of the ship's company were left upon it for six months, till the ship returned, being chased thence by two French South-Sea ships. He had with him his clothes and bedding, with a fire-lock, some powder, bullets, and tobacco, a hatchet, a knife, a kettle, a Bible, some practical pieces, and his

mathematical instruments and books. He diverted and provided for himself as well as he could; but, for the first eight months, had much ado to bear up against melancholy, and the terror of being left alone in such a desolate place. He built two huts with pimento-trees, covered them with long grass, and lined them with the skins of goats, which he killed with his gun as he wanted, so long as his powder lasted, which was but a pound; and that being almost spent, he got fire by rubbing two sticks of pimento-wood together upon his knee. In the lesser hut, at some distance from the other, he dressed his victuals; and in the larger he slept, and employed himself in reading, singing psalms, and praying; so that he said, he was a better Christian while in this solitude, than ever he was before, or than, he was afraid, he should ever be again. At first he never ate anything till hunger constrained him, partly for grief, and partly for want of bread and salt: nor did he go to bed till he could watch no longer; the pimento-wood, which burnt very clear, served him both for fire and candle, and refreshed him with its fragrant smell. He might have had fish enough, but would not eat them for want of salt, except cray-fish, which are as large as our lobsters, and very good: these he boiled, and at other times broiled, as he did his goat's flesh, of which he made very good broth, for they are not so rank as ours: he kept an account of 500 that he killed while he was there, and caught as many more, which he marked on the ear, and let go. When his powder failed, he took them by speed of foot; for his way of living, continual exercise of walking and running, cleared him of all gross humours; so that he ran with wonderful swiftness through the woods, and up the rocks and hills, as we perceived when we employed him to catch goats for us: we had a bull-dog, which we

sent, with several of our nimblest runners, to help him in catching goats; but he distanced and tired both the dog and the men, caught the goats, and brought them to us on his back. He told us that his agility in pursuing a goat had once like to have cost him his life; he pursued it with so much eagerness that he caught hold of it on the brink of a precipice, of which he was not aware, the bushes hiding it from him; so that he fell with the goat down the precipice, a great height, and was so stunned and bruised with the fall that he narrowly escaped with his life; and, when he came to his senses, found the goat dead under him. He lay there about twenty-four hours, and was scarce able to crawl to his hut, which was about a mile distant, or to stir abroad again in ten days. He came at last to relish his meat well enough without salt or bread; and in the season had plenty of good turnips, which had been sown there by Captain Dampier's men, and had now overspread some acres of ground. He had enough of good cabbage from the cabbage-trees, and seasoned his meat with the fruit of the pimento-trees, which is the same as Jamaica pepper, and smells deliciously. . . . He soon wore out all his shoes and clothes by running in the woods; and, at last, being forced to shift without them, his feet became so hard that he ran everywhere without difficulty; and it was some time before he could wear shoes after we found him; for, not being used to any so long, his feet swelled when he came first to wear them again. After he had conquered his melancholy, he diverted himself sometimes with cutting his name on the trees, and the time of his being left, and continuance there. He was at first much pestered with cats and rats, that bred in great numbers from some of each species which had got ashore from ships that put in there to wood and water. The rats gnawed his feet and clothes



whilst asleep, which obliged him to cherish the cats with his goat's flesh, by which many of them became so tame that they would lie about him in hundreds, and soon delivered him from the rats. He likewise tamed some kids; and, to divert himself, would, now and then, sing and dance with them and his cats. So that, by the favour of Providence, and vigour of his youth, being now but forty years old, he came, at last, to conquer all the inconveniences of his solitude, and to be very easy. When his clothes were worn out, he made himself a coat and a cap of goatskins, which he stitched together with little thongs of the same that he cut with his knife. He had no other needle but a nail; and when his knife was worn to the back, he made others, as well as he could, of some iron hoops that were left ashore, which he beat thin, and ground upon stones. Having some linen-cloth by him he sewed him some shirts with a nail, and stitched them with the worsted of his old stocking, which he pulled out on purpose. He had his last shirt on when we found him in the island. At his first coming on board us he had so much forgot his language, for want of use, that we could scarce understand him; for he seemed to speak his words by halves. We offered him a dram; but he would not touch it, having drank nothing but water since his being there: and it was some time before he could relish our victuals. He could give us an account of no other product of the island than what we have mentioned, except some black plums, which are very good, but hard to come at, the trees, which bear them, growing on high mountains and rocks. Pimento trees are plenty here, and we saw some of sixty feet high, and about two yards thick; and cotton trees higher, and near four fathoms round in the stock. The climate is so good that the trees and grass are verdant all the year round.

The winter lasts no longer than June or July, and is not then severe, there being only a small frost and a little hail: but sometimes great rains. The heat of the summer is equally moderate; and there is not much thunder, or tempestuous weather of any sort. He saw no venomous or savage creature on the island, nor any other sort of beasts but goats, the first of which had been put ashore here, on purpose for a breed, by Juan Fernandez, a Spaniard, who settled there with some families, till the continent of Chile began to submit to the Spaniards; which, being more profitable, tempted them to quit this island, capable, however, of maintaining a good number of people, and being made so strong that they could not easily be dislodged from thence. February 3rd we got our blacksmith's forge on shore, set our coopers to work, and made a little tent for me to have the benefit of the air. The *Duchess* had also a tent for their sick men; so that we had a small town of our own here, and everybody employed. A few men supplied us with fish of all sorts; all very good, in such abundance, that in a few hours, we could take as many as would serve 200. There were sea-fowls in the bay, as large as geese; but eat fishy. The governor never failed of procuring us two or three goats a day for our sick men; by which, with the help of the greens and the wholesome air, they recovered very soon of the scurvy; so that Captain Dover and I thought it a very comfortable seat, the weather being neither too hot nor too cold. We spent our time, till the tenth, in refitting our ships, taking wood on board, and laying in water, that which we brought from England and St. Vincent being spoiled by the badness of the casks. We likewise boiled up about eighty gallons of sea-lions' oil, as we might have done several tons had we been provided with vessels. We refined it for our lamps,

to save candles. The sailors sometimes use it to fry their meat, for want of butter, and find it agreeable enough. The men who worked on our rigging, ate young seals, which they preferred to our English victuals, and said it was as good as English lamb, though I should have been glad of such an exchange. We made what haste we could to get all the necessaries on board; for we were informed at the Canaries that five stout French ships were coming together to these seas.

DAVID SAMWELL

d. 1779

A NARRATIVE OF THE DEATH OF  
CAPTAIN JAMES COOK

(Surgeon of the *Discovery*)

IN the month of January, 1779, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* lay about a fortnight at anchor in the bay of Keragegooah, in the Island of Ou-why-ee. During that time, the ships were most plentifully supplied with provisions by the natives, with whom we lived on the most friendly terms. We were universally treated by them with kind attention and hospitality; but the respect they paid to Captain Cook was little short of adoration. It was, therefore, with sentiments of the most perfect goodwill towards the inhabitants that we left the harbour, on the fourth of February. It was Captain Cook's intention to visit the other islands to leeward, and we stood to the westward, towards Mowee, attended by several canoes full of people, who were willing to accompany us as far as they could, before they bade us a final adieu.

On the sixth we were overtaken by a gale of wind; and the next night, the *Resolution* had the misfortune of springing the head of her foremast, in such a dangerous manner that Captain Cook was obliged to return to Keragegooah, in order to have it repaired; for we could find no other convenient harbour on the island. The same gale had occasioned much distress among some canoes that had paid us a visit from the shore. One of them, with two men and a child on board, was picked up by

the *Resolution*, and rescued from destruction: the men, having toiled hard all night in attempting to reach the land, were so much exhausted, that they could hardly mount the ship's side. When they got upon the quarter-deck they burst into tears, and seemed much affected with the dangerous situation from which they had escaped; but the little child appeared lively and cheerful. One of the *Resolution's* boats was also so fortunate as to save a man and two women, whose canoe had been upset by the violence of the waves. They were brought on board, and, with the others, partook of the kindness and humanity of Captain Cook.

On the morning of Wednesday, the tenth, we were within a few miles of the harbour; and were soon joined by several canoes, in which appeared many of our old acquaintance, who seemed to have come to welcome us back. Among them was Coo-aha, a priest: he had brought a small pig and some coco-nuts in his hand, which, after having chanted a few sentences, he presented to Captain Clerke. He then left us and hastened on board the *Resolution*, to perform the same friendly ceremony before Captain Cook. Having but light winds all that day, we could not gain the harbour. In the afternoon a chief of the first rank, and nearly related to Kariopoo, paid us a visit on board the *Discovery*. His name was Ka-mea-mea: he was dressed in a very rich feathered cloak, which he seemed to have brought for sale, but would part with it for nothing except iron daggers. These the chiefs, some time before our departure, had preferred to every other article; for having received a plentiful supply of hatchets and other tools, they began to collect a store of warlike instruments. Ka-mea-mea procured nine daggers for his cloak, and being pleased with his reception he and his attendants slept on board that night.

In the morning of the eleventh of February the ships anchored again in Keragegooah bay, and preparation was immediately made for landing the *Resolution's* foremast. We were visited but by few of the Indians, because there were but few in the bay. On our departure those belonging to other parts had repaired to their several habitations, and were again to collect from various quarters before we could expect to be surrounded by such multitudes as we had once seen in that harbour. In the afternoon I walked about a mile into the country, to visit an Indian friend who had, a few days before, come near twenty miles, in a small canoe, to see me, while the ship lay becalmed. As the canoe had not left us long before a gale of wind came on, I was alarmed for the consequence: however, I had the pleasure to find that my friend had escaped unhurt, though not without some difficulties. I take notice of this short excursion merely because it afforded me an opportunity of observing, that there appeared no change in the disposition or behaviour of the inhabitants. I saw nothing that could induce me to think that they were displeased with our return, or jealous of the intention of our second visit. On the contrary, that abundant good nature which had always characterized them seemed still to glow in every bosom, and to animate every countenance.

The next day, February the twelfth, the ships were put under a taboo, by the chiefs, a solemnity, it seems, that was requisite to be observed before Kariopoo, the king, paid his first visit to Captain Cook after his return. He waited upon him the same day, on board the *Resolution*, attended by a large train, some of which bore the presents designed for Captain Cook, who received him in his usual friendly manner, and gave him several articles in return. This amicable ceremony being settled, the taboo was dissolved, matters went on in the

usual train, and the next day, February the thirteenth, we were visited by the natives in great numbers; the *Resolution's* mast was landed, and the astronomical observatories erected on their former situation. I landed, with another gentleman, at the town of Kavaroah, where we found a great number of canoes, just arrived from different parts of the island, and the Indians busy in constructing temporary huts on the beach, for their residence during the stay of the ships. On our return on board the *Discovery*, we learned that an Indian had been detected in stealing the armourer's tongs from the forge, for which he received a pretty severe flogging, and was sent out of the ship. Notwithstanding the example of this man, in the afternoon another had the audacity to snatch the tongs and a chisel from the same place, with which he jumped overboard, and swam for the shore. The master and a midshipman were instantly dispatched after him, in the small cutter. The Indian seeing himself pursued, made for a canoe; his countrymen took him on board, and paddled as swift by as they could towards the shore; we fired several muskets at them, but to no effect, for they soon got out of the reach of our shot. Pareah, one of the chiefs, who was at that time on board the *Discovery*, understanding what had happened, immediately went ashore, promising to bring back the stolen goods. Our boat was so far distanced in chasing the canoe which had taken the thief on board, that he had time to make his escape into the country. Captain Cook, who was then on shore, endeavoured to intercept his landing; but, it seems, that he was led out of the way by some of the natives, who had officiously intruded themselves as guides. As the master was approaching near the landing-place he was met by some of the Indians in a canoe: they had brought back the tongs and chisel, together with another

article that we had not missed, which happened to be the lid of the water-cask. Having recovered these things, he was returning on board, when he was met by the *Resolution's* pinnace, with five men in her, who, without any orders, had come from the observatories to his assistance. Being thus unexpectedly reinforced, he thought himself strong enough to insist upon having the thief, or the canoe which took him in, delivered up as reprisals. With that view he turned back; and having found the canoe on the beach he was preparing to launch it into the water, when Pareah made his appearance, and insisted upon his not taking it away as it was his property. The officer not regarding him, the chief seized upon him, pinioned his arms behind, and held him by the hair of his head; on which, one of the sailors struck him with an oar: Pareah instantly quitted the officer, snatched the oar out of the man's hand, and snapped it in two across his knee. At length, the multitude began to attack our people with stones. They made some resistance, but were soon overpowered, and obliged to swim for safety to the small cutter, which lay farther out than the pinnace. The officers, not being expert swimmers, retreated to a small rock in the water, where they were closely pursued by the Indians. One man darted a broken oar at the master; but his foot slipping at the time, he missed him, which fortunately saved that officer's life. At last Pareah interfered, and put an end to their violence. The gentlemen, knowing that his presence was their only defence against the fury of the natives, entreated him to stay with them, till they could get off in the boats; but that he refused, and left them. The master went to seek assistance from the party at the observatories; but the midshipman chose to remain in the pinnace. He was very rudely treated by the mob, who plundered the boat of every thing



that was loose on board, and then began to knock her to pieces, for the sake of the iron work; but Pareah fortunately returned in time to prevent her destruction. He had met the other gentleman on his way to the observatories, and suspecting his errand, had forced him to return. He dispersed the crowd again, and desired the gentlemen to return on board: they represented that all the oars had been taken out of the boat; on which he brought some of them back, and the gentlemen were glad to get off without further molestation. They had not proceeded far, before they were overtaken by Pareah, in a canoe: he delivered the midshipman's cap, which had been taken from him in the scuffle, joined noses with them, in token of reconciliation, and was anxious to know, if Captain Cook would kill him for what had happened. They assured him of the contrary, and made signs of friendship to him in return. He then left them, and paddled over to the town of Kavaroah, and that was the last time we ever saw him. Captain Cook returned on board soon after, much displeased with the whole of this disagreeable business; and the same night sent a lieutenant on board the *Discovery*, to learn the particulars of it, as it had originated in that ship.

It was remarkable, that in the midst of the hurry and confusion attending this affair, Kanynah (a chief who had always been on terms particularly friendly with us) came from the spot where it had happened, with a hog to sell on board the *Discovery*: it was of an extraordinarily large size, and he demanded for it a pahowa, or dagger, of an unusual length. He pointed to us that it must be as long as his arm. Captain Clerke not having one of that length, told him he would get one made for him by the morning; with which, being satisfied, he left the hog, and went ashore without making any stay with us. It will not be altogether foreign to the subject, to

mention a circumstance that happened to-day on board the *Resolution*. An Indian chief asked Captain Cook at his table if he were a *Tata Toa*; which means a fighting man, or a soldier. Being answered in the affirmative, he desired to see his wounds: Captain Cook held out his right hand, which had a scar upon it, dividing the thumb from the finger, the whole length of the metacarpal bones. The Indian, being thus convinced of his being a Toa, put the same question to another gentleman present, but he happened to have none of these distinguishing marks: the chief then said, that he himself was a Toa, and showed the scars of some wounds he had received in battle. Those who were on duty at the observatories were disturbed during the night, with shrill and melancholy sounds, which they took to be the lamentations of the women. Perhaps the quarrel between us might have filled their minds with apprehensions for the safety of their husbands: but, be that as it may, their mournful cries struck the sentinels with unusual awe and terror.

To widen the breach between us, some of the Indians, in the night, took away the *Discovery's* large cutter, which lay swamped at the buoy of one of her anchors: they had carried her off so quietly that we did not miss her till the morning, Sunday, February the fourteenth. Captain Clerke lost no time in waiting upon Captain Cook to acquaint him with the accident; he returned on board, with orders for the small launch and cutter to go, under the command of the second lieutenant, and lie off the east point of the bay, in order to intercept all canoes that might attempt to get out; and, if he found it necessary, to fire upon them. At the same time the third lieutenant of the *Resolution*, with the launch and small cutter, was sent on the same service, to the opposite point of the bay; and

the master was dispatched in the large cutter in pursuit of a double canoe, already under sail, making the best of her way out of the harbour. He soon came up with her, and by firing a few muskets, drove her on shore, and the Indians left her: this happened to be the canoe of Omea, a man who bore the title of Orono. He was on board himself, and it would have been fortunate if our people had secured him, for his person was held as sacred as that of the king. During this time, Captain Cook was preparing to go ashore himself, at the town of Kavaroah, in order to secure the person of Kariopoo before he should have time to withdraw himself to another part of the island, out of our reach. This appeared to be the most effectual step that could be taken on the present occasion, for the recovery of the boat. It was the measure he had invariably pursued, in similar cases, at other islands in these seas, and it had always been attended with the desired success: in fact, it would be difficult to point out any other mode of proceeding on these emergencies, likely to attain the object in view. We had reason to suppose that the king and his attendants had fled when the alarm was first given: in that case, it was Captain Cook's intention to secure the large canoes which were hauled up on the beach. He left the ship about seven o'clock, attended by the lieutenant of marines, a sergeant, corporal, and seven private men: the pinnace's crew were also armed, and under the command of Mr. Roberts. As they rowed towards the shore, Captain Cook ordered the launch to leave her station at the west point of the bay, in order to assist his own boat. This is a circumstance worthy of notice, for it clearly shows that he was not unapprehensive of meeting with resistance from the natives, or unmindful of the necessary preparation for the safety of himself and his people. I will venture to say that from the

appearance of things just at that time, there was not one, besides himself, who judged that such precaution was absolutely requisite: so little did his conduct on the occasion bear the marks of rashness, or a precipitate self-confidence! He landed, with the marines, at the upper end of the town of Kava-roah: the Indians immediately flocked round, as usual, and showed him the customary marks of respect, by prostrating themselves before him. There were no signs of hostilities, or much alarm among them. Captain Cook, however, did not seem willing to trust to appearances; but was particularly attentive to the disposition of the marines, and to have them kept clear of the crowd. He first inquired for the king's sons, two youths who were much attached to him, and generally his companions on board. Messengers being sent for them, they soon came to him, and informing him that their father was asleep at a house not far from them, he accompanied them thither, and took the marines along with them. As he passed along, the natives everywhere prostrated themselves before him, and seemed to have lost no part of that respect they had always shown to his person. He was joined by several chiefs, among them was Kanynah, and his brother Koohowroah. They kept the crowd in order, according to their usual custom; and being ignorant of his intention in coming on shore, frequently asked him if he wanted any hogs, or other provisions: he told them that he did not, and that his business was to see the king. When he arrived at the house, he ordered some of the Indians to go in, and inform Kariopoo that he waited without to speak to him. They came out two or three times, and instead of returning any answer from the king, presented some pieces of red cloth to him, which made Captain Cook suspect that he was not in the house; he therefore desired the lieutenant of

marines to go in. The lieutenant found the old man just awaked from sleep, and seemingly alarmed at the message; but he came out without hesitation. Captain Cook took him by the hand, and in a friendly manner, asked him to go on board, to which he very readily consented. Thus far matters appeared in a favourable train, and the natives did not seem much alarmed or apprehensive of hostility on our side; at which Captain Cook expressed himself a little surprised, saying that as the inhabitants of that town appeared innocent of stealing the cutter, he should not molest them, but that he must get the king on board. Kariopoo sat down before his door, and was surrounded by a great crowd: Kanynah and his brother were both very active in keeping order among them. In a little time, however, the Indians were observed arming themselves with long spears, clubs, and daggers, and putting on thick mats, which they use as armour. This hostile appearance increased, and became more alarming on the arrival of two men in a canoe from the opposite side of the bay, with the news of a chief, called Kareemoo, having been killed by one of the *Discovery's* boats; in their passage across they had also delivered this account to each of the ships. Upon that information, the women, who were sitting upon the beach at their breakfasts, and conversing familiarly with our people in the boats, retired, and a confused murmur spread through the crowd. An old priest came to Captain Cook, with a coco-nut in his hand, which he held out to him as a present, at the same time singing very loud. He was often desired to be silent, but in vain: he continued importunate and troublesome, as there was no such thing as getting rid of him or his noise: it seemed as if he meant to divert their attention from his countrymen, who were growing more tumultuous, and arming themselves in every quarter;

Captain Cook, being at the same time surrounded by a great crowd, thought his situation rather hazardous: he therefore ordered the lieutenant of marines to march his small party to the water-side, where the boats lay within a few yards of the shore: the Indians readily made a lane for them to pass, and did not offer to interrupt them. The distance they had to go might be about fifty or sixty yards; Captain Cook followed, having hold of Kariopoo's hand, who accompanied him very willingly: he was attended by his wife, two sons, and several chiefs. The troublesome old priest followed, making the same savage noise. Keeowa, the younger son, went directly into the pinnace, expecting his father to follow; but just as he arrived at the water-side his wife threw her arms about his neck, and, with the assistance of two chiefs forced him to sit down by the side of a double canoe. Captain Cook expostulated with them, but to no purpose: they would not suffer the king to proceed, telling him, that he would be put to death if he went on board the ship. Kariopoo, whose conduct seemed entirely resigned to the will of others, hung down his head, and appeared much distressed.

While the king was in this situation, a chief, well known to us, of the name of Coho, was observed lurking near, with an iron dagger, partly concealed under his cloak, seemingly with the intention of stabbing Captain Cook or the lieutenant of marines. The latter proposed to fire at him, but Captain Cook would not permit it. Coho closing upon them, obliged the officer to strike him with his piece, which made him retire. Another Indian laid hold of the sergeant's musket and endeavoured to wrench it from him, but was prevented by the lieutenant's making a blow at him. Captain Cook, seeing the tumult increase, and the Indians growing more daring and resolute, observed that if he were

to take off the king by force, he could not do it without sacrificing the lives of many of his people. He then paused a little, and was on the point of giving his orders to re-embark, when a man threw a stone at him; which he returned with a discharge of small shot (with which one barrel of his double piece was loaded). The man, having a thick mat before him, received little or no hurt: he brandished his spear, and threatened to dart it at Captain Cook, who being still unwilling to take away his life, instead of firing with ball, knocked him down with his musket. He expostulated strongly with the most forward of the crowd, upon their turbulent behaviour. He had given up all thoughts of getting the king on board, as it appeared impracticable; and his care was then only to act on the defensive, and to secure the safe embarkation for his small party, which was closely pressed by a body of several thousand people. Keowa, the king's son, who was in the pinnace, being alarmed on hearing the first firing, was, at his own entreaty, put on shore again; for even at that time Mr. Roberts, who commanded her, did not apprehend that Captain Cook's person was in any danger; otherwise he would have detained the prince, which, no doubt, would have been a great check upon the Indians. One man was observed, behind a double canoe, in the action of darting his spear at Captain Cook, who was forced to fire at him in his own defence, but happened to kill another close to him, equally forward in the tumult: the sergeant observing that he had missed the man he aimed at, received orders to fire at him, which he did, and killed him. By this time the impetuosity of the Indians was somewhat repressed; they fell back in a body, and seemed staggered: but being pushed on by those behind, they returned to the charge, and poured a volley of stones among the marines, who, without waiting for orders, returned

it with a general discharge of musketry, which was instantly followed by a fire from the boats. At this Captain Cook was heard to express his astonishment: he waved his hand to the boats, calling them to cease firing, and to come nearer in to receive the marines. Mr. Roberts immediately brought the pinnace as close to the shore as he could without grounding, notwithstanding the showers of stones that fell among the people: but Mr. John Williamson, the lieutenant who commanded in the launch, instead of pulling in to the assistance of Captain Cook, pulled farther off, at the moment that everything seems to have depended upon the timely exertions of those in the boats. By his own account, he mistook the signal: but be that as it may, this circumstance appears to me to have decided the fatal turn of the affair, and to have removed every chance which remained with Captain Cook of escaping with his life. The business of having the marines out of the water, in consequence of that, fell altogether upon the pinnace; which thereby became so much crowded that the crew were, in a great measure, prevented from using their fire-arms, or giving what assistance they otherwise might have done, to Captain Cook; so that he seems, at the most critical point of time, to have wanted the assistance of both boats, owing to the removal of the launch. For notwithstanding that they kept up a fire on the crowd from the situation to which they removed in that boat, the fatal confusion which ensued on her being withdrawn, to say the least of it, must have prevented the full effect, that the prompt co-operation of the two boats, according to Captain Cook's orders, must have had towards the preservation of himself and his people. At that time it was to the boats alone that Captain Cook had to look for his safety; for when the marines had fired, the Indians rushed among them, and



forced them into the water, where four of them were killed: their lieutenant was wounded, but fortunately escaped, and was taken up by the pinnace. Captain Cook was then the only one remaining on the rock: he was observed making for the pinnace, holding his left-hand against the back of his head, to guard it from the stones, and carrying his musket under the other arm. An Indian was seen following him, but with caution and timidity; for he stopped once or twice, as if undetermined to proceed. At last he advanced upon him unawares, and with a large club,<sup>1</sup> or common stake, gave him a blow on the back of the head, and then precipitately retreated. The stroke seemed to have stunned Captain Cook: he staggered a few paces, then fell on his hand and one knee, and dropped his musket. As he was rising, and before he could recover his feet, another Indian stabbed him in the back of the neck with an iron dagger. He then fell into a bite of water about knee deep, where others crowded upon him, and endeavoured to keep him under; but struggling very strongly with them, he got his head up, and casting his look towards the pinnace, seemed to solicit assistance. Though the boat was not yet above five or six yards distant from him, yet from the crowded and confused state of the crew, it seems, it was not in their power to save him.

<sup>1</sup> I have heard one of the gentlemen who were present say that the first injury he received was from a dagger, as it is represented in the Voyage; but, from the account of many others, who were also eye-witnesses, I am confident in saying that he was first struck with a club. I was afterwards confirmed in this, by Kaireekoa, the priest, who particularly mentioned the name of the man who gave him the blow, as well as that of the chief who afterwards struck him with a dagger. This is a point not worth disputing about: I mention it, as being solicitous to be accurate in this account, even in circumstances, of themselves, not very material.

The Indians got him under again, but in deeper water: he was, however, able to get his head up once more, and being almost spent in the struggle, he naturally turned to the rock, and was endeavouring to support himself by it when a savage gave him a blow with a club, and he was seen alive no more. They hauled him up lifeless on the rocks, where they seemed to take a savage pleasure in using every barbarity to his dead body, snatching the daggers out of each other's hands to have the horrid satisfaction of piercing the fallen victim of their barbarous rage.

I need make no reflection on the great loss we suffered on this occasion, or attempt to describe what we felt. It is enough to say that no man was ever more beloved or admired: and it is truly painful to reflect that he seems to have fallen a sacrifice merely for want of being properly supported; a fate singularly to be lamented, as having fallen to his lot, who had ever been conspicuous for his care of those under his command, and who seemed, to the last, to pay as much attention to their preservation, as to that of his own life.

If anything could have added to the shame and indignation universally felt on the occasion, it was to find that his remains had been deserted, and left exposed on the beach, although they might have been brought off. It appears, from the information of four or five midshipmen who arrived on the spot at the conclusion of the fatal business, that the beach was then almost entirely deserted by the Indians, who at length had given way to the fire of the boats, and dispersed through the town: so that there seemed no great obstacle to prevent the recovery of Captain Cook's body; but the lieutenant returned on board without making the attempt. It is unnecessary to dwell longer on this painful subject, and to relate the complaints and censures that

fell upon the conduct of the lieutenant. It will be sufficient to observe, that they were so loud, as to oblige Captain Clerke publicly to notice them, and to take the depositions of his accusers down in writing. The Captain's bad state of health and approaching dissolution, it is supposed, induced him to destroy these papers a short time before his death.

It is a painful task to be obliged to notice circumstances which seem to reflect upon the character of any man. A strict regard to truth, however, compelled me to the insertion of these facts, which I have offered merely as facts, without presuming to connect with them any comment of my own: esteeming it the part of a faithful historian, 'to extenuate nothing, nor set down ought in malice'.

The fatal accident happened at eight o'clock in the morning, about an hour after Captain Cook landed. It did not seem that the king, or his sons, were witnesses to it; but it is supposed that they withdrew in the midst of the tumult. The principal actors were the other chiefs, many of them the king's relations and attendants: the man who stabbed him with the dagger was called Nooāh. I happened to be the only one who recollected his person, from having on a former occasion mentioned his name in the journal I kept. I was induced to take particular notice of him, more from his personal appearance than any other consideration, though he was of high rank, and a near relation of the king: he was stout and tall, with a fierce look and demeanour, and one who united in his figure the two qualities of strength and agility in a greater degree than ever I remembered to have seen before in any other man. His age might be about thirty, and by the white scurf on his skin, and his sore eyes, he appeared to be a hard drinker of Kava. He was a constant companion of the king, with whom I first saw him, when he paid a visit to Cap-

tain Clerke. The chief who first struck Captain Cook with the club, was called Karimano-craha, but I did not know him by his name. These circumstances I learnt of honest Kaireekoa, the priest; who added that they were both held in great esteem on account of that action: neither of them came near us afterwards. When the boats left the shore, the Indians carried away the dead body of Captain Cook and those of the marines to the rising ground, at the back of the town, where we could plainly see them with our glasses from the ships.

This most melancholy accident appears to have been altogether unexpected and unforeseen, as well on the part of the natives as ourselves. I never saw sufficient reason to induce me to believe that there was anything of design, or a preconcerted plan on their side, or that they purposely sought to quarrel with us: thieving, which gave rise to the whole, they were equally guilty of in our first and second visits. It was the cause of every misunderstanding that happened between us: their petty thefts were generally overlooked, but sometimes slightly punished: the boat, which they at last ventured to take away, was an object of no small magnitude to people in our situation, who could not possibly replace her, and therefore not slightly to be given up. We had no other chance of recovering her but by getting the person of their king into our possession: on our attempting to do that, the natives became alarmed for his safety, and naturally opposed those whom they deemed his enemies. In the sudden conflict that ensued we had the unspeakable misfortune of losing our excellent Commander, in the manner already related. It is in this light the affair has always appeared to me as entirely accidental, and not in the least owing to any previous offence received, or jealousy of our second visit entertained by the natives.

Pareah seems to have been the principal instrument in bringing about this fatal disaster. We learnt afterwards that it was he who had employed some people to steal the boat: the king did not seem to be privy to it, or even apprised of what had happened, till Captain Cook landed.

It was generally remarked that at first the Indians showed great resolution in facing our fire-arms; but it was entirely due to ignorance of their effect. They thought that their thick mats would defend them from a ball, as well as from a stone; but being soon convinced of their error, yet still at a loss to account how such execution was done among them, they had recourse to a stratagem, which, although it answered no other purpose, served to show their ingenuity and quickness of invention. Observing the flashes of the muskets, they naturally concluded that water would counteract their effect, and therefore, very sagaciously, dipped their mats, or armour, in the sea, just as they came on to face our people: but finding this last resource to fail them, they soon dispersed, and left the beach entirely clear. It was an object they never neglected, even at the greatest hazard, to carry off their slain; a custom, probably, owing to the barbarity with which they treat the dead body of an enemy, and the trophies they make of his bones.

SIR GEORGE GREY<sup>1</sup>

1812-1898

THE ART OF NETTING LEARNED BY  
KAHUKURA FROM THE FAIRIES

(KO TE KORERO MO NGA PATUPAIAREHE)

ONCE upon a time a man of the name of Kahukura wished to pay a visit to Rangiaowhia, a place lying far to the northward, near the country of the tribe called Te Rarawa. Whilst he lived at his own village, he was continually haunted by a desire to visit that place. At length he started on his journey, and reached Rangiaowhia, and as he was on his road, he passed a place where some people had been cleaning mackerel, and he saw the inside of the fish lying all about the sand on the sea-shore: surprised at this, he looked about at the marks, and said to himself, 'Oh, this must have been done by some of the people of the district.' But when he came to look a little more narrowly at the footmarks, he saw that the people who had been fishing had made them in the night-time, not that morning, nor in the day; and he said to himself, 'These are no mortals who have been fishing here—spirits must have done this; had they been men, some of the reeds and grass which they sat on in their canoe would have been lying about.' He felt quite sure from several circumstances, that spirits or fairies had been there; and after observing everything well, he returned to the house where he was stopping. He, however, held fast in his heart what he had seen, as something very striking to tell all his friends in every direction, and

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from *Polynesian Mythology*.

as likely to be the means of gaining knowledge which might enable him to find out something new.

So that night he returned to the place where he had observed all these things, and just as he reached the spot, back had come the fairies too, to haul their net for mackerel; and some of them were shouting out, 'The net here! the net here!' Then a canoe paddled off to fetch the other in which the net was laid, and as they dropped the net into the water, they began to cry out, 'Drop the net in the sea at Rangiaowhia, and haul it at Mamaku.' These words were sung out by the fairies as an encouragement in their work, and from the joy of their hearts at their sport in fishing.

As the fairies were dragging the net to the shore, Kahukura managed to mix amongst them, and hauled away at the rope; he happened to be a very fair man, so that his skin was almost as white as that of these fairies, and from that cause he was not observed by them. As the net came close in to the shore, the fairies began to cheer and shout, 'Go out into the sea some of you, in front of the rocks, lest the nets should be entangled in Tawatawauia a Teweteweuia,' for that was the name of a rugged rock standing out from the sandy shore; the main body of the fairies kept hauling at the net, and Kahukura pulled away in the midst of them.

When the first fish reached the shore, thrown up in the ripples driven before the net as they hauled it in, the fairies had not yet remarked Kahukura, for he was almost as fair as they were. It was just at the very first peep of dawn that the fish were all landed, and the fairies ran hastily to pick them up from the sand, and to haul the net up on the beach. They did not act with their fish as men do, dividing them into separate loads for each, but every one took up what fish he liked, and ran a twig through their gills, and as they strung the fish, they continued

calling out, ' Make haste, run here, all of you, and finish the work before the sun rises.'

Kahukura kept on stringing his fish with the rest of them. He had only a very short string, and, making a slip-knot at the end of it, when he had covered the string with fish, he lifted them up, but had hardly raised them from the ground when the slip-knot gave way from the weight of the fish, and off they fell; then some of the fairies ran good-naturedly to help him to string his fish again, and one of them tied the knot at the end of the string for him; but the fairy had hardly gone after knotting it, before Kahukura had unfastened it, and again tied a slip-knot at the end; then he began stringing his fish again, and when he had got a great many on, up he lifted them, and off they slipped as before. This trick he repeated several times, and delayed the fairies in their work by getting them to knot his string for him, and put his fish on it. At last full daylight broke, so that there was light enough to distinguish a man's face, and the fairies saw that Kahukura was a man; then they dispersed in confusion, leaving their fish and their net, and abandoning their canoes, which were nothing but stems of the flax. In a moment the fairies started for their own abodes; in their hurry, as has just been said, they abandoned their net, which was made of rushes; and off the good people fled as fast as they could go. Now was first discovered the stitch for netting a net, for they left theirs with Kahukura, and it became a pattern for him. He thus taught his children to make nets, and by them the Maori race were made acquainted with that art, which they have now known from very remote times.



## TE KANAWA'S ADVENTURE WITH A TROOP OF FAIRIES

TE KANAWA, a chief of Waikato, was the man who fell in with a troop of fairies upon the top of Puke-more, a high hill in the Waikato district.

This chief happened one day to go out to catch kiwis with his dogs, and when night came on he found himself right at the top of Puke-more. So his party made a fire to give them light, for it was very dark. They had chosen a tree to sleep under—a very large tree, the only one fit for their purpose that they could find; in fact, it was a very convenient sleeping-place, for the tree had immense roots, sticking up high above the ground: they slept between these roots, and made the fire beyond them.

As soon as it was dark they heard loud voices, like the voices of people coming that way; there were the voices of men, of women, and of children, as if a very large party of people were coming along. They looked for a long time, but could see nothing; till at last Te Kanawa knew the noise must proceed from fairies. His people were all dreadfully frightened, and would have run away if they could; but where could they run to? for they were in the midst of a forest, on the top of a lonely mountain, and it was dark night.

For long time the voices grew louder and more distinct as the fairies drew nearer and nearer, until they came quite close to the fire; Te Kanawa and his party were half dead with fright. At last the fairies approached to look at Te Kanawa, who was a very handsome fellow. To do this, they kept peeping slyly over the large roots of the tree under which the hunters were lying, and kept constantly looking at Te Kanawa, whilst his companions were

quite insensible from fear. Whenever the fire blazed up brightly, off went the fairies and hid themselves, peeping out from behind stumps and trees; and when it burnt low, back they came close to it, merrily singing as they moved—

‘ Here you come climbing over Mount Tirangi  
To visit the handsome chief of Ngapuhi,  
Whom we have done with.’<sup>1</sup>

A sudden thought struck Te Kanawa that he might induce them to go away if he gave them all the jewels he had about him; so he took off a beautiful little figure, carved in green jasper, which he wore as a neck ornament, and a precious carved jasper ear-drop from his ear. Ah, Te Kanawa was only trying to amuse and please them to save his life, but all the time he was nearly frightened to death. However, the fairies did not rush on the men to attack them, but only came quite close to look at them. As soon as Te Kanawa had taken off his neck-ornament, and pulled out his jasper ear-ring, and his other ear-ring, made of a tooth of the tiger-shark, he spread them out before the fairies, and offered them to the multitude who were sitting all round about the place; and thinking it better the fairies should not touch him, he took a stick, and fixing it into the ground, hung his neck-ornament and ear-rings upon it.

As soon as the fairies had ended their song, they took the shadows of the ear-rings, and handed them about from one to the other, until they had passed through the whole party, which then suddenly disappeared, and nothing more was seen of them.

The fairies carried off with them the shadows of all the jewels of Te Kanawa, but they left behind

<sup>1</sup> Te Wherowhero did not remember the whole song, but that this was the concluding verse; it was probably in allusion to their coming to peep at Te Kanawa.

them his jasper neck-ornament and his ear-rings, so that he took them back again, the hearts of the fairies being quite contented at getting the shadows alone; they saw, also, that Te Kanawa was an honest, well-dispositioned fellow. However, the next morning, as soon as it was light, he got down the mountain as fast as he could, without stopping to hunt longer for kiwis.

The fairies are a very numerous people; merry, cheerful, and always singing, like the cricket. Their appearance is that of human beings, nearly resembling a European's; their hair being very fair, and so is their skin. They are very different from the Maories, and do not resemble them at all.

Te Kanawa had died before any Europeans arrived in New Zealand.

## THE VOYAGE TO NEW ZEALAND

THEY felled a totara tree in Rarotonga, which lies on the other side of Hawaiki, that they might build the Arawa from it. The tree was felled, and thus the canoe was hewn out from it and finished. The names of the men who built this canoe were, Rata, Wahie-roa, Ngahue, Parata, and some other skilful men, who helped to hew out the Arawa and to finish it.

A chief of the name of Hotu-roa, hearing that the Arawa was built, and wishing to accompany them, came to Tama-te-kapua and asked him to lend him his workmen to hew out some canoes for him too, and they went and built and finished the Tainui and some other canoes.

The workmen above mentioned are those who

built the canoes in which our forefathers crossed the ocean to this island, to Aotea-roa. The names of the canoes were as follows: the Arawa was first completed, then Tainui, then Matatua, and Taki-tumu, and Kura-hau-po, and Toko-maru, and Mata-whaorua. These are the names of the canoes in which our forefathers departed from Hawaiki, and crossed to this island. When they had lashed the topsides on to the Tainui, Rata slew the son of Manaia, and hid his body in the chips and shavings of the canoes. The names of the axes with which they hewed out these canoes were Hauhau-te-Rangi, and Tutauru. Tutauru was the axe with which they cut off the head of Uenuku.

All these axes were made from the block of green stone brought back by Ngahue to Hawaiki, which was called 'The fish of Ngahue'. He had previously come to these islands from Hawaiki, when he was driven out from thence by Hine-tu-a-hoanga, whose fish or stone was Obsidian. From that cause Ngahue came to these islands; the canoes which afterwards arrived here came in consequence of his discovery.

When the canoes were built and ready for sea, they were dragged afloat, the separate lading of each canoe was collected and put on board, with all the crews. Tama-te-kapua then remembered that he had no skilful priest on board his canoe, and he thought the best thing he could do was to outwit Ngatoro-i-rangi, the chief who had command of the Tainui. So just as his canoe shoved off, he called out to Ngatoro: 'I say, Ngatoro, just come on board my canoe, and perform the necessary religious rites for me.' Then the priest Ngatoro came on board, and Tama-te-kapua said to him: 'You had better also call your wife, Kearoa on board, that she may make the canoe clean or common, with an offering of sea-weed to be laid in the canoe instead

of an offering of fish, for you know the second fish caught in a canoe, or sea-weed, or some substitute, ought to be offered for the females, the first for the males; then my canoe will be quite common, for all the ceremonies will have been observed, which should be followed with canoes made by priests.' Ngatoro assented to all this, and called his wife, and they both go into Tama's canoe. The very moment they were on board, Tama' called out to the men on board his canoe: 'Heave up the anchors and make sail'; and he carried off with him Ngatoro and his wife, that he might have a priest and wise man on board his canoe. Then they up with the fore-sail, the main-sail, and the mizen, and away shot the canoe.

Up then came Ngatoro from below, and said: 'Shorten sail, that we may go more slowly, lest I miss my own canoe.' And Tama' replied: 'Oh, no, no; wait a little, and your canoe will follow after us.' For a short time it kept near them, but soon dropped more and more astern, and when darkness overtook them, on they sailed, each canoe proceeding on its own course.

Two thefts were upon this occasion perpetrated by Tama-te-kapua; he carried off the wife of Ruao, and Ngatoro and his wife, on board the Arawa. He made a fool of Ruao too, for he said to him: 'Oh, Rua', you, like a good fellow, just run back to the village and fetch me my axe Tutauru; I pushed it in under the sill of the window of my house.' And Rua' was foolish enough to run back to the house. Then off went Tama' with the canoe, and when Rua' came back again, the canoe was so far off that its sails did not look much bigger than little flies. So he fell to weeping for all his goods on board the canoe, and for his wife Whakaoti-rangi, whom Tama-te-kapua had carried off as a wife for himself. Tama-te-kapua committed these two great thefts

when he sailed for these islands. Hence this proverb: 'A descendant of Tama-te-kapua will steal anything he can.'

When evening came on Rua' threw himself into the water, as a preparation for his incantations to recover his wife, and he then changed the stars of evening into the stars of morning, and those of the morning into the stars of the evening, and this was accomplished. In the meantime the Arawa scudded away far out on the ocean, and Ngatoro thought to himself: 'What a rate this canoe goes at—what a vast space we have already traversed. I know what I'll do; I'll climb up upon the roof of the house which is built on the platform joining the two canoes, and try to get a glimpse of the land in the horizon, and ascertain whether we are near it, or very far off.' But in the first place he felt some suspicions about his wife, lest Tama-te-kapua should steal her too, for he had found out what a treacherous person he was. So he took a string and tied one end of it to his wife's hair, and kept the other end of the string in his hand, and then he climbed up on the roof. He had hardly got on the top of the roof when Tama' laid hold of his wife, and he cunningly untied the end of the string which Ngatoro had fastened to her hair, and made it fast to one of the beams of the canoe, and Ngatoro feeling it tight thought his wife had not moved, and that it was still fast to her. At last Ngatoro came down again, and Tama-te-kapua heard the noise of his steps as he was coming, but he had not time to get the string tied fast to the hair of Kearoa's head again; but he jumped as fast as he could into his own berth, which was next to that of Ngatoro, and Ngatoro, to his surprise, found one end of the string tied fast to the beam of the canoe.

Then he knew that his wife had been disturbed by Tama', and he asked her, saying: 'Oh, wife, has

not some one disturbed you? ' Then his wife replied to him: ' Cannot you tell that from the string being fastened to the beam of the canoe? ' And then he asked her: ' Who was it? ' And she said: ' Who was it, indeed? Could it be any one else but Tama-tekapua? ' Then her husband said to her: ' You are a noble woman indeed thus to confess this; you have gladdened my heart by this confession; I thought after Tama' had carried us both off in this way, that he would have acted generously, and not loosely in this manner; but, since he has dealt in this way, I will now have my revenge on him.'

Then that priest again went forth upon the roof of the house and stood there, and he called aloud to the heavens, in the same way that Rua' did, and he changed the stars of the evening into those of morning, and he raised the winds that they should blow upon the prow of the canoe, and drive it astern, and the crew of the canoe were at their wits' end, and quite forgot their skill as seamen, and the canoe drew straight into the whirlpool, called ' The throat of Te Parata ',<sup>1</sup> and dashed right into that whirlpool.

The canoe became engulfed by the whirlpool, and its prow disappeared in it. In a moment the waters reached the first bailing place in the bows, in another second they reached the second bailing place in the centre, and the canoe now appeared to be going down into the whirlpool head foremost; then up started Hei, but before he could rise they had already sunk far into the whirlpool. Next the rush of waters was heard by Ihenga, who slept forward, and he shouted out: ' Oh, Ngatoro, oh, we are settling down head first. The pillow of your wife Kearoa has already fallen from under her head! '

<sup>1</sup> The people of New Zealand have another name for this whirlpool; they call it, ' the steep descent where the world ends '.

Ngatoro sat astern listening; the same cries of distress reached him a second time. Then up sprang Tama-te-kapua, and he in despair shouted out: 'Oh, Ngatoro, Ngatoro, aloft there! Do you hear? The canoe is gone down so much by the bow, that Kearoa's pillow has rolled from under her head.' The priest heard them, but neither moved nor answered until he heard the goods rolling from the decks and splashing into the water; the crew meanwhile held on to the canoe with their hands with great difficulty, some of them having already fallen into the sea.

When these things all took place, the heart of Ngatoro was moved to pity, for he heard, too, the shrieks and cries of the men, and the weeping of the women and children. Then up stood that mighty man again and by his incantations changed the aspect of the heavens, so that the storm ceased, and he repeated another incantation to draw the canoe back out of the whirlpool, that is, to lift it up again.

Lo, the canoe rose up from the whirlpool, floating rightly; but, although the canoe itself thus floated out of the whirlpool, a great part of its lading had been thrown out into the water, a few things only were saved, and remained in the canoe. A great part of their provisions were lost as the canoe was sinking into the whirlpool. Thence comes the native proverb, if they can give a stranger but little food, or only make a present of a small basket of food: 'Oh, it is the half-filled basket of Whakaoti-rangi, for she only managed to save a very small part of her provisions.' Then they sailed on, and landed at Whanga-Paraoa, in Aotea here. As they drew near to land, they saw with surprise some pohutukawa trees of the sea-coast, covered with beautiful red flowers, and the still water reflected back the redness of the trees.

Then one of the chiefs of the canoe cried out to



his messmates: ' See there, red ornaments for the head are much more plentiful in this country than in Hawaiki, so I'll throw my red head-ornaments into the water ' ; and, so saying, he threw them into the sea. The name of that man was Tauninihi; the name of the red head-ornament he threw into the sea was Taiwhakaea. The moment they got on shore they ran to gather the pohutukawa flowers, but no sooner did they touch them than the flowers fell to pieces; then they found out that these red head-ornaments were nothing but flowers. All the chiefs on board the Arawa were then troubled that they should have been so foolish as to throw away their red head-ornaments into the sea. Very shortly afterwards the ornaments of Tauninihi were found by Mahina on the beach of Mahiti. As soon as Tauninihi heard they had been picked up, he ran to Mahina to get them again, but Mahina would not give them up to him; thence this proverb for anything which has been lost and is found by another person: ' I will not give it up, 'tis the red head-ornament which Mahina found.'

As soon as the party landed at Whanga-Paraoa, they planted sweet potatoes, that they might grow there; and they are still to be found growing on the cliffs at that place.

Then the crew, wearied from the voyage, wandered idly along the shore, and there they found the fresh carcase of a sperm whale stranded upon the beach. The Tainui had already arrived in the same neighbourhood, although they did not at first see that canoe nor the people who had come in it; when, however, they met, they began to dispute as to who had landed first and first found the dead whale, and to which canoe it consequently belonged; so, to settle the question, they agreed to examine the sacred place which each party had set up to return thanks in to the gods for their safe arrival,

that they might see which had been longest built; and, doing so, they found that the posts of the sacred place put up by the Arawa were quite green, whilst the posts of the sacred place set up by the Tainui had evidently been carefully dried over the fire before they had been fixed in the ground. The people who had come in the Tainui also showed part of a rope which they had made fast to its jaw-bone. When these things were seen, it was admitted that the whale belonged to the people who came in the Tainui, and it was surrendered to them. And the people in the Arawa, determining to separate from those in the Tainui, selected some of their crew to explore the country in a north-west direction, following the coast line. The canoe then coasted along, the land party following it along the shore; this was made up of 140 men, whose chief was Taikehu, and these gave to a place the name of Te Ranga of Taikehu.

The Tainui left Whanga-Paraoa<sup>1</sup> shortly after the Arawa, and, proceeding nearly in the same direction as the Arawa, made the Gulf of Hauraki, and then coasted along to Rakau-mangamanga, or Cape Brett, and to the island with an arched passage through it, called Motukokako, which lies off the cape; thence they ran along the coast to Whiwhia, and to Te Aukanapanapa, and to Muri-whenua, or the country near the North Cape. Finding that the land ended there, they returned again along the coast until they reached the Tamaki, and landed there, and afterwards proceeded up the creek to Tau-oma, or the portage, where they were surprised to see flocks of sea-gulls and oyster-catchers passing over from the westward; so they went off to explore the country in that direction, and to their great surprise found a large sheet of water lying imme-

<sup>1</sup> Whanga-Paraoa, the bay of the sperm whale, so called from the whale found there.

diately behind them, so they determined to drag their canoes over the portage at a place they named Otahuhu, and to launch them again on the vast sheet of salt-water which they had found.

The first canoe which they hauled across was the *Toko-maru*—that they got across without difficulty. They next began to drag the *Tainui* over the isthmus; they hauled away at it in vain, they could not stir it; for one of the wives of Hoturoa, named *Marama-kiko-hura*, who was unwilling that the tired crews should proceed farther on this new expedition, had by her enchantments fixed it so firmly to the earth that no human strength could stir it; so they hauled, they hauled, they excited themselves with cries and cheers, but they hauled in vain, they cried aloud in vain, they could not move it. When their strength was quite exhausted by these efforts, then another of the wives of Hoturoa, more learned in magic and incantations than *Marama-kiko-hura*, grieved at seeing the exhaustion and distress of her people, rose up, and chanted forth an incantation far more powerful than that of *Marama-kiko-hura*; then at once the canoe glided easily over the carefully laid skids, and it soon floated securely upon the harbour of Manuka. The willing crews urged on the canoes with their paddles; they soon discovered the mouth of the harbour upon the west coast, and passed out through it into the open sea; they coasted along the western coast to the southwards, and discovering the small port of Kawhia, they entered it, and, hauling up their canoe, fixed themselves there for the time, whilst the *Arawa* was left at Maketu.

We now return to the *Arawa*. We left the people of it at Tauranga. That canoe next floated at Motiti;<sup>1</sup> they named that place after a spot in

<sup>1</sup> *Kei Motiti koe e noho ana*, 'I suppose you are at Motiti, as you can find no firewood'.

Hawaiki (because there was no firewood there). Next Tia, to commemorate his name, called the place now known by the name of Rangiuru, Takapu-o-tapui-ika-nui-a-Tia. Then Hei stood up and called out: 'I name that place Takapu-o-waitahanui-a-Hei'; the name of that place is now Ottawa. Then stood up Tama-te-kapua, and pointing to the place now called the Heads of Maketu, he called out: 'I name that place Te Kuraetanga-o-te-ihu-o-Tama-te-kapua.' Next Kahu called a place, after his name, Motiti-nui-a-Kahu.

Ruaeo, who had already arrived at Maketu, started up. He was the first to arrive there in his canoe—the Pukeatea-wai-nui—for he had been left behind by the Arawa, and his wife Whakaoti-rangi had been carried off by Tama-te-kapua, and after the Arawa had left he had sailed in his own canoe for these islands, and landed at Maketu, and his canoe reached land the first; well, he started up, cast his line into the sea, with the hooks attached to it, and they got fast in one of the beams of the Arawa, and it was pulled ashore by him (whilst the crew were asleep), and the hundred and forty men who had accompanied him stood upon the beach of Maketu, with skids all ready laid, and the Arawa was by them dragged upon the shore in the night, and left there; and Ruaeo seated himself under the side of the Arawa, and played upon his flute, and the music woke his wife, and she said: 'Dear me, that's Rua'!'—and when she looked, there he was sitting under the side of the canoe; and they passed the night together.

At last Rua' said: 'O mother of my children, go back now to your new husband, and presently I'll play upon the flute and putorino, so that both you and Tama-te-kapua may hear. Then do you say to Tama-te-kapua "O! la, I had a dream in the night that I heard Rua' playing a tune upon his flute,"

and that will make him so jealous that he will give you a blow, and then you can run away from him again, as if you were in a rage and hurt, and you can come to me.'

Then Whakaoti-rangi returned, and lay down by Tama-te-kapua, and she did everything exactly as Rua' had told her, and Tama' began to beat her (and she ran away from him). Early in the morning Rua' performed incantations, by which he kept all the people in the canoe in a profound sleep, and whilst they still slept from his enchantments, the sun rose, and mounted high up in the heavens. In the forenoon, Rua' gave the canoe a heavy blow with his club; they all started up; it was almost noon, and when they looked down over the edge of their canoe, there were the hundred and forty men of Rua' sitting under them, all beautifully dressed with feathers, as if they had been living on the Gannet Island, in the channel of Karewa, where feathers are so abundant; and when the crew of the Arawa heard this, they all rushed upon deck, and saw Rua' standing in the midst of his one hundred and forty warriors.

Then Rua' shouted out as he stood: 'Come here, Tama-te-kapua; let us two fight the battle, you and I alone. If you are stronger than I am, well and good, let it be so; if I am stronger than you are, I'll dash you to the earth.'

Up sprang then the hero Tama-te-kapua; he held a carved two-handed sword, a sword the handle of which was decked with red feathers. Rua' held a similar weapon. Tama' first struck a fierce blow at Rua'. Rua' parried it, and it glanced harmlessly off; then Rua' threw away his sword, and seized both the arms of Tama-te-kapua; he held his arms and his sword, and dashed him to the earth. Tama' half rose, and was again dashed down; once more he almost rose, and was thrown again. Still Tama'

fiercely struggled to rise and renew the fight. For the fourth time he almost rose up, then Rua', overcome with rage, took a heap of vermin (this he had prepared for the purpose, to cover 'Tama' with insult and shame), and rubbed them on 'Tama-te-kapua's head and ear, and they adhered so fast that 'Tama' tried in vain to get them out.

Then Rua' said: 'There, I've beaten you; now keep the woman, as a payment for the insults I've heaped upon you, and for having been beaten by me.' But 'Tama' did not hear a word he said; he was almost driven mad with the pain and itching, and could do nothing but stand scratching and rubbing his head; whilst Rua' departed with his hundred and forty men to seek some other dwelling-place for themselves; if they had turned against 'Tama' and his people to fight against them, they would have slain them all.

These men were giants—'Tama-te-kapua was nine feet high, Rua' was eleven feet high; there have been no men since that time so tall as those heroes. The only man of these later times who was as tall as these was Tu-hou-rangi: he was nine feet high; he was six feet up to the arm-pits. This generation have seen his bones; they used to be always set up by the priests in the sacred places when they were made high places for the sacred sacrifices of the natives, at the times the potatoes and sweet potatoes were dug up, and when the fishing season commenced, and when they attacked an enemy; then might be seen the people collecting, in their best garments, and with their ornaments, on the days when the priests exposed 'Tu-hou-rangi's bones to their view. At the time that the island Mokoia, in the lake of Roto-rua, was stormed and taken by the Nga-Puhi, they probably carried those bones off, for they have not since been seen.

After the dispute between 'Tama-te-kapua and

Rua' took place, Tama' and his party dwelt at Maketu, and their descendants after a little time spread to other places. Ngatoro-i-rangi went, however, about the country, and where he found dry valleys, stamped on the earth, and brought forth springs of water; he also visited the mountains, and placed Patupaiarehe, or fairies, there, and then returned to Maketu and dwelt there.

## THE STORY OF HINE-MOA

### (THE MAIDEN OF ROTORUA)

AND the man said to him, ' Now, O governor, just look round you, and listen to me, for there is something worth seeing here; that very spot that you are sitting upon, is the place on which sat our great ancestress Hine-Moa, when she swam over here from the main. But I'll tell you the whole story.

' Look you now, Rangi-Uru was the name of the mother of a chief called Tutanekai; she was, properly, the wife of Whakaue-Kaipapa (the great ancestor of the Ngatiwhakaue tribe); but she at one time ran away with a chief named Tuwharetoa (the great ancestor of the Te Heukeu and the Ngatituwharetoa tribe); before this she had three sons by Whakaue, their names were Tawakeheimoa, Ngaranui, and Tuteaiti. It was after the birth of this third son, that Rangi-Uru eloped with Tuwharetoa, who had come to Rotorua as a stranger on a visit. From this affair sprang Tutanekai, who was an illegitimate child; but finally, Whakaue and Rangi-Uru were united again, and she had another son whose name was Kopako; and then she had a daughter whom they named Tupa; she was the last child of Whakaue.

‘ They all resided here on the island of Mokoia. Whakaue was very kind indeed to Tutanekai, treating him as if he was his own son; so they grew up here, Tutanekai and his elder brothers, until they attained to manhood.

‘ Now there reached them here a great report of Hine-Moa, that she was a maiden of rare beauty, as well as of high rank, for Umukaria (the great ancestor of the Ngati Unui-karia-hapu, or sub-tribe) was her father; her mother’s name was Hine-Maru. When such fame attended her beauty and rank, Tutanekai and each of his elder brothers desired to have her as a wife.

‘ About this time Tutanekai built an elevated balcony, on the slope of that hill just above you there, which is called Kaiweka. He had contracted a great friendship for a young man named Tiki; they were both fond of music—Tutanekai played on the horn, and Tiki on the pipe; and they used to go up into the balcony and play on their instruments in the night; and in calm evenings the sound of their music was wafted by the gentle land-breeze across the lake to the village at Owata, where dwelt the beautiful young Hine-Moa, the younger sister of Wahiao.

‘ Hine-Moa could then hear the sweet-sounding music of the instruments of Tutanekai and of his dear friend Tiki, which gladdened her heart within her—every night the two friends played on their instruments in this manner—and Hine-Moa then ever said to herself: “ Ah! that is the music of Tutanekai which I hear.”

‘ For although Hine-Moa was so prized by her family, that they would not betroth her to any chief; nevertheless, she and Tutanekai had met each other on those occasions when all the people of Rotorua come together.

‘ In those great assemblies of the people Hine-



Moa had seen Tutanekai, and as they often glanced each at the other, to the heart of each of them the other appeared pleasing, and worthy of love, so that in the breast of each there grew up a secret passion for the other. Nevertheless, Tutanekai could not tell whether he might venture to approach Hine-Moa to take her hand, to see would she press his in return, because, said he, "Perhaps I may be by no means agreeable to her"; on the other hand, Hine-Moa's heart said to her, "If you send one of your female friends to tell him of your love, perchance he will not be pleased with you."

'However, after they had thus met for many, many days, and had long fondly glanced each at the other, Tutanekai sent a messenger to Hine-Moa, to tell of his love; and when Hine-Moa had seen the messenger, she said, "Eh-hu! have we then each loved alike?"

'Some time after this, and when they had often met, Tutanekai and his family returned to their own village; and being together one evening, in the large warm house of general assembly, the elder brothers of Tutanekai said, "Which of us has by signs, or by pressure of the hand, received proofs of the love of Hine-Moa?" And one said, "It is I who have"; and another said, "No; but it is I." Then they also questioned Tutanekai, and he said, "I have pressed the hand of Hine-Moa, and she pressed mine in return"; but his elder brothers said, "No such thing; do you think she would take any notice of such a low-born fellow as you are?" He then told his reputed father, Whakaue, to remember what he would then say to him, because he really had received proofs of Hine-Moa's love; they had even actually arranged a good while before the time at which Hine-Moa should run away to him; and, when the maiden asked, "What shall be the sign by which I shall know that I should then run to

you?" he said to her, "A trumpet will be heard sounding every night, it will be I who sound it, beloved—paddle then your canoe to that place." So Whakaue kept in his mind this confession which Tutanekai had made to him.

'Now always about the middle of the night Tutanekai, and his friend Tiki, went up into their balcony and played, the one upon his trumpet, the other upon his flute, and Hine-Moa heard them, and desired vastly to paddle in her canoe to Tutanekai; but her friends suspecting something, had been careful with the canoes, to leave none afloat, but had hauled them all up upon the shore of the lake; and thus her friends had always done for many days and for many nights.

'At last she reflected in her heart, saying, "How can I then contrive to cross the lake to the island of Mokoia; it can plainly be seen that my friends suspect what I am going to do." So she sat down upon the ground to rest; and then soft measures reached her from the horn of Tutanekai, and the young and beautiful chieftainess felt as if an earthquake shook her to make her go to the beloved of her heart; but then arose the recollection, that there was no canoe. At last she thought, perhaps I might be able to swim across. So she took six large, dry, empty gourds, as floats, lest she should sink in the water, three of them for each side, and she went out upon a rock, which is named Iri-iri-kapua, and from thence to the edge of the water, to the spot called Wairerewai, and there she threw off her clothes and cast herself into the water, and she reached the stump of a sunken tree which used to stand in the lake, and was called Hinewhata, and she clung to it with her hands, and rested to take breath, and when she had a little eased the weariness of her shoulders, she swam on again, and whenever she was exhausted she floated with the current of

the lake, supported by the gourds, and after recovering strength she swam on again; but she could not distinguish in which direction she should proceed, from the darkness of the night; her only guide was, however, the soft measure from the instrument of Tutanekai; that was the mark by which she swam straight to Waikimihia, for just above that hot-spring was the village of Tutanekai, and swimming, at last she reached the island of Mokoia.

‘At the place where she landed on the island, there is a hot-spring separated from the lake only by a narrow ledge of rocks; this is it—it is called, as I just said, Waikimihia. Hine-Moa got into this to warm herself, for she was trembling all over, partly from the cold, after swimming in the night across the wide lake of Rotorua, and partly also, perhaps, from modesty, at the thoughts of meeting Tutanekai.

‘Whilst the maiden was thus warming herself in the hot-spring, Tutanekai happened to feel thirsty, and said to his servant, “Bring me a little water”; so his servant went to fetch water for him, and drew it from the lake in a calabash, close to the spot where Hine-Moa was sitting; the maiden, who was frightened, called out to him in a gruff voice like that of a man, “Whom is that water for?” He replied, “It’s for Tutanekai.” “Give it there, then,” said Hine-Moa. And he gave her the water, and she drank, and having finished drinking, purposely threw down the calabash, and broke it. Then the servant asked her, “What business had you to break the calabash of Tutanekai?” But Hine-Moa did not say a word in answer. The servant then went back, and Tutanekai said to him, “Where is the water I told you to bring me?” So he answered, “Your calabash was broken.” And his master asked him, “Who broke it?” and he answered, “The man who is in the bath.” And

Tutanekai said to him, "Go back again then, and fetch me some water."

He, therefore, took a second calabash, and went back, and drew water in the calabash from the lake; and Hine-Moa again said to him, "Whom is that water for?" so the slave answered as before, "For Tutanekai." And the maiden again said, "Give it to me, for I am thirsty"; and the slave gave it to her, and she drank, and purposely threw down the calabash and broke it; and these occurrences took place repeatedly between those two persons.

At last the slave went again to Tutanekai, who said to him, "Where is the water for me?" and his servant answered, "It is all gone, your calabashes have been broken." "By whom?" said his master. "Didn't I tell you that there is a man in the bath?" answered his servant. "Who is the fellow?" said Tutanekai. "How can I tell?" replied the slave; "why, he's a stranger." "Didn't he know the water was for me?" said Tutanekai; "how did the rascal dare to break my calabashes? why, I shall die from rage."

Then Tutanekai threw on some clothes, and caught hold of his club, and away he went, and came to the bath, and called out, "Where's that fellow who broke my calabashes?" And Hine-Moa knew the voice, that the sound of it was that of the beloved of her heart; and she hid herself under the overhanging rocks of the hot-spring; but her hiding was hardly a real hiding, but rather a bashful concealing of herself from Tutanekai, that he might not find her at once, but only after trouble and careful searching for her; so he went feeling about along the banks of the hot-spring, searching everywhere, whilst she lay coily hid under the ledges of the rock, peeping out, wondering when she would be found. At last he caught hold of a hand, and cried out, "Hollo, who's this?" And Hine-Moa an-

swered, "It's I, Tutanekai." And he said, "But who are you?—who's I?" Then she spoke louder, and said, "It's I, 'tis Hine-Moa." And he said, "Ho! ho! ho! can such in very truth be the case? let us two go then to my house." And she answered, "Yes"; and she rose up in the water as beautiful as the wild white hawk, and stepped upon the edge of the bath as graceful as the shy white crane; and he threw garments over her and took her, and they proceeded to his house, and reposed there; and thenceforth, according to the ancient laws of the Maori, they were man and wife.

' When the morning dawned, all the people of the village went forth from their houses to cook their breakfasts, and they all ate; but Tutanekai tarried in his house. So Whakaue said, "This is the first morning that Tutanekai has slept in this way, perhaps the lad is ill—bring him here—rouse him up." Then the man who was to fetch him went, and drew back the sliding wooden window of the house, and peeping in, saw four feet. Oh! he was greatly amazed, and said to himself, "Who can this companion of his be?" However, he had seen quite enough, and turning about, hurried back as fast as he could to Whakaue, and said to him, "Why, there are four feet, I saw them myself in the house." Whakaue answered, "Who's his companion then? hasten back and see." So back he went to the house, and peeped in at them again, and then for the first time he saw it was Hine-Moa. Then he shouted out in his amazement, "Oh! here's Hine-Moa, here's Hine-Moa, in the house of Tutanekai"; and all the village heard him, and there arose cries on every side—"Oh! here's Hine-Moa, here's Hine-Moa with Tutanekai." And his elder brothers heard the shouting, and they said, "It is not true!" for they were very jealous indeed. Tutanekai then appeared coming from his house, and Hine-Moa following

him, and his elder brothers saw that it was indeed Hine-Moa; and they said, "It is true! it is a fact!"

'After these things, Tiki thought within himself, "Tutanekai has married Hine-Moa, she whom he loved; but as for me, alas! I have no wife"; and he became sorrowful, and returned to his own village. And Tutanekai was grieved for Tiki; and he said to Whakaue, "I am quite ill from grief for my friend Tiki;" and Whakaue said, "What do you mean?" And Tutanekai replied, "I refer to my younger sister Tupa, let her be given as a wife to my beloved friend, to Tiki"; and his reputed father Whakaue consented to this; so his young sister Tupa was given to Tiki, and she became his wife.

'The descendants of Hine-Moa and of Tutanekai are at this very day dwelling on the lake of Rotorua, and never yet have the lips of the offspring of Hine-Moa forgotten to repeat tales of the great beauty of their renowned ancestress Hine-Moa, and of her swimming over here; and this too is the burden of a song still current.'

## PAKEHA MAORI (F. E. MANING)

1812-1883

### A MODEL RANGATIRA <sup>1</sup>

WHEN I purchased my land, the payment was made on the ground, and immediately divided and subdivided amongst the different sellers. Some of them who, according to their own representations formerly made to me, were the sole and only owners of the land, received for their share about the value of one shilling, and moreover, as I also observed, did not appear at all disappointed.

One old *rangatira*, before whom a considerable portion of the payment had been laid as his share of the spoil, gave it a slight shove with his foot, expressive of refusal, and said, 'I will not accept any of the payment; I will have the pakeha.' I saw some of the magnates present seemed greatly disappointed at this, for I dare say they had expected to have the pakeha *as well as* the payment. But the old gentleman had regularly checkmated them by refusing to accept any payment; and being also a person of great respectability, i.e. a good fighting man, with twenty more at his back, he was allowed to have his way: thereby, in the opinion of all the natives present, making a far better thing of the land sale than any of them, though he had received no part of the payment.

I consequently was therefore a part, and by no means an inconsiderable one, of the payment for my own land; but though now part and parcel of the property of the old *rangatira* aforementioned, a good deal of liberty was allowed me. The fact

<sup>1</sup> *Rangatira*, a chief.

of my having become his pakeha made our respective relations and duties to each other about as follows :

Firstly.—At all times, places, and companies my owner had the right to call me ' his pakeha '.

Secondly.—He had the general privilege of ' pot-luck ' whenever he chose to honour my establishment with a visit: said pot-luck to be tumbled out to him on the ground before the house; he being far too great a man to eat out of plates or dishes, or any degenerate invention of that nature; as, if he did, they would all become *tapu*, and of no use to any one but himself: nor indeed to himself either, as he did not see the use of them.

Thirdly.—It was well understood that to avoid the unpleasant appearance of paying ' blackmail ', and to keep up general kindly relations, my owner should from time to time make me small presents, and that in return I should make him presents of five or six times the value: all this to be done as if arising from mutual love and kindness, and not the slightest allusion to be ever made to the relative value of the gifts on either side. (An important article.)

Fourthly.—It was to be a *sine qua non* that I must purchase everything the chief or his family had to sell, whether I wanted them or not, and give the highest market price, or rather more. (Another very important article.)

Fifthly.—The chief's own particular pipe never to be allowed to become extinguished for want of the needful supply of tobacco.

Sixthly.—All desirable jobs of work, and all advantages of all kinds, to be offered first to the family of my *rangatira* before letting any one else have them; payment for same to be about 25 per cent. more than to any one else, exclusive of a *douceur* to the chief himself because he did not work.



In return for these duties and customs, well and truly performed on my part, the chief was understood to :

Firstly.—Stick up for me in a general way, and not let me be bullied or imposed upon by any one but himself, so far as he was able to prevent it.

Secondly.—In case of me being plundered or maltreated by any powerful marauder, it was the duty of my chief to come in hot haste, with all his family, armed to the teeth, to my rescue—after all was over, and when it was too late to be of any service. He was also bound on such occasions to make a great noise, dance the war-dance, and fire muskets (I finding the powder), and to declare loudly what he would have done had he only been in time. I, of course, on such occasions, for my own dignity, and in consideration of the spirited conduct of my friends, was bound to order two or three fat pigs to be killed, and lots of potatoes to be served out to the ‘ army ’; who were always expected to be starving, as a general rule. A distribution of tobacco, in the way of largess, was also a necessity of the case.

Thirdly.—In case of my losing anything of consequence by theft—a thing which, as a veracious pakeha, I am bound to say seldom happened: the natives in those days being, as I have already mentioned, a very law-observing people (of the law of *muru*), had, indeed, little occasion to steal; the above-named law answering their purposes in a general way much better, and helping them pretty certainly to any little matter they coveted; yet, as there are exceptions to all rules, theft would sometimes be committed; and then, as I was saying, it became the bounden duty of my *rangatira* to get the stolen article back if he were able, and keep it for himself for his trouble, unless I gave him something of more value in lieu thereof.

The chief who claimed me was a good specimen of the Maori *rangatira*. He was a very old man, and had fought the French when Marion, the French circumnavigator, was killed. He had killed a Frenchman himself, and carried his thighs and legs many miles as a *bonne bouche* for his friends at home at the pa. This old gentleman was not head of his tribe. He was a man of good family, related to several high chiefs. He was head of a strong family, or *hapu*, which mustered a considerable number of fighting men, all his near relations. He had been himself a most celebrated fighting man and a war chief; and was altogether a highly respectable person, and of great weight in the councils of the tribe. I may say I was fortunate in having been appropriated by this old patrician.

He gave me very little trouble; did not press his rights and privileges too forcibly on my notice; and, in fact behaved in all respects towards me in so liberal and friendly a manner that before long I began to have a very sincere regard for him, and he to take a sort of paternal interest in me; this was both gratifying to observe, and also extremely comical sometimes, when he, out of real anxiety to see me a perfectly accomplished *rangatira*, would lecture on good manners, etiquette, and the use of the spear. He was, indeed, a model of a *rangatira*, and well worth being described.

He was a little man, with a high massive head, and remarkably high square forehead, on which the tattooer had exhausted his art. Though, as I have said, of a great age, he was still nimble and active: he had evidently been one of those tough active men who, though small in stature, are a match for any one. There was in my old friend's eyes a sort of dull fiery appearance, which, when anything excited him, or when he recounted some of those numerous battles, onslaughts, massacres,

or stormings, in which all the active part of his life had been spent, actually seemed to blaze up and give forth real fire. His breast was covered with spear-wounds, and he had also two very severe spear-wounds on his head; but he boasted that no single man had ever been able to touch him with the point of a spear. It was in grand *mêlées*, where he would have sometimes six or eight antagonists, that he had received these wounds. He was a great general, and I have heard him criticize closely the order and conduct of every battle of consequence which had been fought for fifty years before my arrival in the country. On these occasions the old 'martialist' would draw on the sand the plan of the battle he was criticizing and describing; and in the course of time I began to perceive that, before the introduction of the musket, the art of war had been brought to great perfection by the natives: when large numbers were engaged in a pitched battle, the order of battle resembled, in a most striking manner, some of the most approved orders of battle of the ancients. Since the introduction of firearms the natives have entirely altered their tactics, and adopted a system better adapted to the new weapon and the nature of the country.

My old friend had a great hatred for the musket. He said that in battles fought with the musket there were never so many men killed as when, in his young days, men fought hand to hand with the spear: then a good warrior would kill six, eight, ten, or even twenty men in a single fight. For when once the enemy broke and commenced to run, the combatants being so close together, a fast runner would knock a dozen on the head in a short time; and the great aim of these fast-running warriors, of whom my old friend had been one, was to chase straight on and never stop, only striking one blow at one man, so as to cripple him, in order that those behind

should be sure to overtake and finish him. It was not uncommon for one man, strong and swift of foot, when the enemy were fairly routed, to stab with a light spear ten or a dozen men, in such a way as to ensure their being overtaken and killed. On one occasion of this kind my old tutor had the misfortune to stab a running man in the back: he did it, of course, scientifically, so as to stop his running; and as he passed him by he perceived it was his wife's brother, who was finished immediately by men close behind. I should have said that the man was a brother of one of my friend's four wives; which being the case, I dare say he had a sufficient number of brothers-in-law to afford to kill one now and then.

A worse mishap, however, occurred to him on another occasion. He was returning from a successful expedition to the south (in the course of which, by the by, he and his men killed and cooked, in Shortland Crescent, several men of the enemy, and forced three others to jump over a cliff which is, I think, now called Soldier's Point), when off the Mahurangi a smoke was seen rising from amongst the trees near the beach. They at once concluded that it came from the fires of people belonging to that part of the country, whom they considered as game; they therefore waited till night, concealing their canoes behind some rocks, and when it became dark, landed; they then divided into two parties, took the supposed enemy completely by surprise, and attacked, rushing upon them from two opposite directions at once. My *rangatira*, dashing furiously among them, and—as I can well suppose—those eyes of his flashing fire, had the happiness of once again killing the first man, and being authorized to shout *Ki au te mataika!* A few more blows, and the parties recognize each other: they are friends!—men of the same tribe! Who is the last *mataika*

slain by this famous warrior? Quick, bring a flaming brand—here he lies dead! Ha! It is his father!

Now an ancient knight of romance, under similar awkward circumstances, would probably have retired from public life, sought out some forest cave, where he would have hung up his armour, let his beard grow, flogged himself twice a day ‘regular’, and lived on ‘pulse’—which I suppose means pea-soup—for the rest of his life. But my old *rangatira* and his companions had not a morsel of that sort of romance about them. The killing of my friend’s father was looked upon as a very clever exploit in itself; though a very unlucky one. So after having scolded one another for some time—one party telling the other they were served right for not keeping a better look-out, and the other answering that they should have been sure whom they were going to attack before making the onset—they all held a *tangi* or lamentation for the old warrior who had just received his *mittimus*; and then killing a prisoner, whom they had brought in the canoes for fresh provisions, they had a good feast; after which they returned all together to their own country, taking the body of their lamented relative along with them. This happened many years before I came to the country, and when my *rangatira* was one of the most famous fighting men of his tribe.

This Maori *rangatira* I am describing had passed his whole life, with but little intermission, in scenes of battle, murder, and bloodthirsty atrocities of the most terrific description; mixed with actions of the most heroic courage, self-sacrifice, and chivalric daring, such as leave one perfectly astounded to find them the deeds of one and the same people: one day doing acts which, had they been performed in ancient Greece, would have immortalized the actors, and the next committing barbarities too horrible for relation, and almost incredible.

The effect of a life of this kind was observable plainly enough, in my friend. He was utterly devoid of what weak mortals call 'compassion'. He seemed to have no more feeling for the pain, tortures, or death of others than a stone. Should one of his family be dying or wounded, he merely felt it as the loss of one fighting man. As for the death of a woman, or any non-combatant, he did not feel it at all; though the person might have suffered horrid tortures: indeed, I have seen him scolding severely a fine young man, his near relative, when actually expiring, for being such a fool as to blow himself up by accident, and deprive his family of a fighting man. The last words the dying man heard were these: 'It serves you right. There you are, looking very like a burnt stick! It serves you right—a burnt stick! Serves you right!' It really *was* vexatious. A fine stout young fellow to be wasted in that way.

As for fear, I saw one or two instances to prove he knew very little about it: indeed, to be killed in battle seemed to him a natural death. He was always grumbling that the young men thought of nothing but trading; and whenever he proposed to them to take him where he might have a final battle (*he riri wakamutunga*), where he might escape dying of old age, they always kept saying 'Wait till we get more muskets', or 'more gunpowder', or more something or another: 'as if men could not be killed without muskets!' He was not cruel either; he was only unfeeling. He had been guilty, it is true, in his time, of what we should call terrific atrocities to his prisoners, which he calmly and calculatingly perpetrated as *utu*, or retaliation for similar barbarities committed by them or their tribe.

And here I must retract the word guilty, which I see I have written inadvertently; for—according to the morals and principles of the people of whom he was one, and of the time to which he belonged, and

the training he had received—so far from being guilty, he did a praiseworthy, glorious, and public-spirited action when he opened the jugular vein of a bound captive and sucked huge draughts of his blood.

To say the truth, he was a very nice old man, and I liked him very much. It would not, however, be advisable to put him in a passion; not much good would be likely to arise from it, as, indeed, I could show by one or two very striking instances which came under my notice; though to say the truth he was not easily put out of temper. He had one great moral rule—it was, indeed, his rule of life: he held that every man had a right to do everything and anything he chose, provided he was able and willing to stand the consequences; though he thought some men fools for trying to do things which they could not carry out pleasantly, and which ended in getting them baked.

I once hinted to him that, should every one reduce these principles to practice, he himself might find it awkward; particularly as he had so many mortal enemies. To which he replied, with a look which seemed to pity my ignorance, that every one *did* practise this rule to the best of their abilities, but that some were not so able as others; and that as for his enemies, he should take care they never surprised *him*; a surprise being, indeed, the only thing he seemed to have any fear at all of. In truth, he had occasion to look out sharp. He never was known to sleep more than three or four nights in the same place, and often, when there were ill-omens, he would not sleep in a house at all, or two nights following in one place, for a month together. I never saw him without both spear and tomahawk, and ready to defend himself at a second's notice: a state of preparation perfectly necessary; for though in his own country and surrounded by his tribe, his death

would have been such a triumph for hundreds, not of distant enemies, but of people within a day's journey, that none could tell at what moment some stout young fellow in search of *utu* and an *ingoa toa* (a warlike reputation) might rush upon him, determined to have his head or leave his own.

The old buck himself had, indeed, performed several exploits of this nature, the last of which occurred just at the time I came into the country, but before I had the advantage of his acquaintance. His tribe were at war with some people at the distance of about a day's journey. One of their villages was on the border of a dense forest. My *rangatira*, then a very old man, started off alone, and without saying a word to any one, took his way through the forest, which extended the whole way between his village and the enemy, crept like a lizard into the enemy's village, and then, shouting his war-cry, dashed amongst a number of people he saw sitting together on the ground, and who little expected such a salute. In a minute he had run three men and one woman through the body, received five dangerous spear-wounds himself, and escaped to the forest; and finally he got safe home to his own country and people. Truly my old *rangatira* was a man of a thousand—a model *rangatira*. This exploit, if possible, added to his reputation, and every one said his *mana* would never decline. The enemy had been panic-stricken, thinking a whole tribe were upon them, and fled like a flock of sheep: except the three men who were killed. They all attacked my old chief at once, and were all disposed of in less than a minute, after, as I have said, giving him five desperate wounds. The woman was just 'stuck' as a matter of course, as she came in his way.

My old *rangatira* at last began to show signs that his time to leave this world of care was approaching. He had arrived at a great age, and a rapid and general



breaking up of his strength became plainly observable. He often grumbled that men should grow old, and oftener that no great war broke out in which he might make a final display, and die with *éclat*. The last two years of his life were spent almost entirely at my house, which, however, he never entered. He would sit whole days on a fallen puriri near the house, with his spear sticking up beside him, and speaking to no one, but sometimes humming in a low droning tone some old ditty which no one knew the meaning of but himself—and at night he would disappear to some of the numerous nests, or little sheds, he had around the place. In summer, he would roll himself in his blanket and sleep anywhere, but no one could tell exactly where.

In the hot days of summer, when his blood, I suppose, got a little warm, he would sometimes become talkative, and recount the exploits of his youth. As he warmed to the subject he would seize his spear and go through all the incidents of some famous combat, repeating every thrust, blow, and parry as they actually occurred, and going through as much exertion as if he were really and truly fighting for his life. He used to go through these pantomimic labours as a duty whenever he had an assemblage of the young men of the tribe around him; to whom, as well as to myself, he was most anxious to communicate that which he considered the most valuable of all knowledge, a correct idea of the uses of the spear, a weapon he really used in a most graceful and scientific manner; but he would ignore the fact that 'Young New Zealand' had laid down the weapon for ever, and already matured a new system of warfare adapted to their new weapons, and listened to his lectures only out of respect to himself and not for his science.

At last this old lion was taken seriously ill, and removed permanently to the village; and one even-

ing a smart handsome lad, of about twelve years of age, came to tell me that his *tupuna* was dying, and had said he would 'go' to-morrow, and had sent for me to see him before he died. The boy also added that the tribe were *ka poto*, or assembled, to the last man, around the dying chief. I must here mention that, though this old *rangatira* was not the head of his tribe, he had been for about half a century the recognized war-chief of almost all the sections, or *hapu*, of a very numerous and warlike *iwi*, or tribe, who had now assembled from all their distant villages and *pas* to see him die. I could not, of course, neglect the invitation; so at daylight next morning I started on foot for the native village. On my arrival about midday, I found it crowded by a great assemblage of natives. I was saluted by the usual *haere mai!* and a volley of musketry. I at once perceived that, out of respect to my old owner, the whole tribe from far and near, hundreds of whom I had never seen, considered it necessary to make much of me—at least for that day—and I found myself consequently at once in the position of a 'personage'. 'Here comes the pakeha!—his pakeha!—make way for the pakeha!—kill those dogs that are barking at the pakeha!' Bang! bang! Here a double barrel nearly blew my cap off by way of salute: I did for a moment think my head was off. However, being quite *au fait* in Maori etiquette by this time, thanks to the instructions and example of my old friend, I fixed my eyes with a vacant expression, looking only straight before me, recognized nobody, and took notice of nothing; not even the muskets fired under my nose or close to my back at every step, and each, from having four or five charges of powder, making a report like a cannon. On I stalked, looking neither to the right nor to the left, with my spear walking-staff in my hand, to where I saw a great crowd, and where I of

course knew the dying man was. I walked straight on, not even pretending to see the crowd: as was 'correct' under the circumstances; I being supposed to be entranced by the one absorbing thought of seeing 'mataora', or once more in life my *rangatira*.

The crowd divided as I came up, and closed again behind me as I stood in the front rank before the old chief, motionless; and, as in duty bound, trying to look the image of mute despair: which I flatter myself I did, to the satisfaction of all parties. The old man I saw at once was at his last hour. He had dwindled to a mere skeleton. No food of any kind had been prepared for or offered to him for three days; as he was dying it was of course considered unnecessary. At his right side lay his spear, tomahawk, and musket. (I never saw him with the musket in his hand all the time I knew him.) Over him was hanging his greenstone *mere*, and at his left side, close, and touching him, sat a stout, athletic savage, with a countenance disgustingly expressive of cunning and ferocity, and who, as he stealthily marked me from the corner of his eye, I recognized as one of those limbs of Satan, a Maori *tohunga*. The old man was propped up in a reclining position, his face towards the assembled tribe, who were all there waiting to catch his last words. I stood before him, and thought I perceived he recognized me. Still all was silence, and for a full half-hour we all stood there, waiting patiently for the closing scene. Once or twice the *tohunga* said to him in a very loud voice, 'The tribe are assembled, you won't die silent?'

At last, after about half an hour, he became restless, his eyes rolled from side to side, and he tried to speak; but failed. The circle of men closed nearer, and there was evidence of anxiety and expectation amongst them; but a dead silence was maintained.

Then suddenly, without any apparent effort, and in a manner which startled me, the old man spoke clearly out, in the ringing metallic tone of voice for which he had been formerly so remarkable, particularly when excited. He spoke. 'Hide my bones quickly where the enemy may not find them: hide them at once.' He spoke again—'Oh, my tribe, be brave! be brave that you may live. Listen to the words of my pakeha; he will unfold the designs of his tribe.' This was in allusion to a very general belief amongst the natives at the time, that the Europeans designed sooner or later to exterminate them and take the country; a thing the old fellow had cross-questioned me about a thousand times: and the only way I could find to ease his mind was to tell him that if ever I heard of any such proposal I would let him know, protesting at the same time that no such intention existed. This notion of the natives has since that time done much harm, and will do more, for it is not yet quite given up.

He continued—'I give my *mere* to my pakeha,'—'my two old wives will hang themselves,'—(here a howl of assent from the two old women in the rear rank)—'I am going; be brave, after I am gone.' Here he began to rave; he fancied himself in some desperate battle, for he began to call to celebrated comrades who had been dead forty or fifty years. I remember every word: 'Charge!' shouted he—'Charge! *Wata*, charge! *Tara*, charge! charge!' Then, after a short pause—'Rescue! rescue! to my rescue! *ahau! ahau!* rescue!' The last cry for 'rescue' was in such a piercing tone of anguish and utter desperation, that involuntarily I advanced a foot and hand, as if starting to his assistance; a movement, as I found afterwards, not unnoticed by the superstitious tribe. At the same instant that he gave the last despairing and most agonizing cry for 'rescue', I saw his eyes actually blaze; his

square jaw locked, he set his teeth, and rose nearly to a sitting position, and then fell back dying. He only murmured—'How sweet is man's flesh', and then the gasping breath and upturned eye announced the last moment.

The *tohunga*, now bending close to the dying man's ear, roared out, '*Kai kotahi ki te ao! Kai kotahi ki te ao! Kai kotahi ki te po!*' The poor savage was now, as I believe, past hearing, and gasping his last. '*Kai kotahi ki te ao!*'—shouted the devil priest again in his ear, and shaking his shoulder roughly with his hand—'*Kai kotahi ki te ao—Kai kotahi ki te po!*' Then, the priest giving a significant look to the surrounding hundreds of natives, a roar of musketry burst forth. '*Kai kotahi ki te ao!*' Thus in a din like pandemonium, guns firing, women screaming, and the accursed *tohunga* shouting in his ear, died 'Lizard Skin', as good a fighting man as ever worshipped force or trusted in the spear. His death on the whole was thought happy; for his last words were full of good omen:—'How sweet is man's flesh!'

Next morning the body had disappeared. This was contrary to ordinary custom, but in accordance with the request of the old warrior. No one, even of his own tribe, knows where his body is concealed but the two men who carried it off in the night. All that I know is that it lies in a cave, with the spear and tomahawk beside it.

The two old wives were hanging by the neck from a scaffold at a short distance, which had been made to place potatoes on out of reach of rats. The shrivelled old creatures were quite dead. I was for a moment forgetful of the 'correct' thing, and called to an old chief, who was near, to cut them down. He said, in answer to my hurried call, 'By-and-by; it is too soon yet: *they might recover.*' 'Oh,' said I, at once recalled to my sense of pro-

priety, ' I thought they had been hanging all night,' and thus escaped the great risk of being thought a mere meddling pakeha. I now perceived the old chief was employed making a stretcher, or *kauhoa*, to carry the bodies on. At a short distance also were five old creatures of women sitting in a row, crying, with their eyes fixed on the hanging objects, and everything was evidently going on *selon les règles*. I walked on. ' *E tika ana* ', said I to myself. ' It 's all right, I dare say '.

The two young wives also had made a desperate attempt in the night to hang themselves, but had been prevented by two young men, who, by some unaccountable accident, had come upon them just as they were stringing themselves up; and who, seeing that they were not actually ' ordered for execution ', by great exertion, and with the assistance of several female relations, whom they called to their assistance, prevented them from killing themselves out of respect for their old lord. Perhaps it was to revenge themselves for this meddling interference that these two young women married the two young men before the year was out; in consequence of which, and as a matter of course, the husbands were robbed by the tribe of everything they had in the world (which was not much), except their arms. They also had to fight some half-dozen duels each with spears; in which, however, no one was killed, and no more blood drawn than could be well spared. All this they went through with commendable resignation; and so, due respect having been paid to the memory of the old chief, and the appropriators of his widows duly punished according to law, further proceedings were stayed, and everything went on comfortably. And so the world goes round.

# HERMAN MELVILLE

1819-1891

## NORFOLK ISLE AND THE CHOLA WIDOW

FAR to the north-east of Charles's Isle, sequestered from the rest, lies Norfolk Isle; and, however significant to most voyagers, to me, through sympathy, that lone island has become a spot made sacred by the strangest trials of humanity.

It was my first visit to the Encantadas. Two days had been spent ashore in hunting tortoises. There was not time to capture many; so on the third afternoon we loosed our sails. We were just in the act of getting under way, the uprooted anchor yet suspended and invisibly swaying beneath the wave, as the good ship gradually turned her heel to leave the island behind, when the seaman who heaved with me at the windlass paused suddenly, and directed my attention to something moving on the land, not along the beach, but somewhat back, fluttering from a height.

In view of the sequel of this little story, be it here narrated how it came to pass, that an object which partly from its being so small was quite lost to every other man on board, still caught the eye of my handspike companion. The rest of the crew, myself included, merely stood up to our spikes in heaving, whereas, unwontedly exhilarated, at every turn of the ponderous windlass, my belted comrade leaped atop of it, with might and main giving a downward, thewy, perpendicular heave, his raised eye bent in cheery animation upon the slowly

receding shore. Being high lifted above all others was the reason he perceived the object, otherwise unperceivable; and this elevation of his eye was owing to the elevation of his spirits; and this again—for truth must out—to a dram of Peruvian pisco, in guerdon for some kindness done, secretly administered to him that morning by our mulatto steward. Now, certainly, pisco does a deal of mischief in this world; yet seeing that, in the present case, it was the means, though indirect, of rescuing a human being from the most dreadful fate, must we not also admit that sometimes pisco does a deal of good?

Glancing across the water in the direction pointed out, I saw some white thing hanging from an inland rock, perhaps half a mile from the sea.

‘It is a bird; a white-winged bird; perhaps a—no; it is—it is a handkerchief!’

‘Ay, a handkerchief!’ echoed my comrade, and with a louder shout apprised the captain.

Quickly now—like the running out and training of a great gun—the long cabin spy-glass was thrust through the mizzen rigging from the high platform of the poop; whereupon a human figure was plainly seen upon the inland rock, eagerly waving towards us what seemed to be the handkerchief.

Our captain was a prompt, good fellow. Dropping the glass, he lustily ran forward, ordering the anchor to be dropped again; hands to stand by the boat, and lower away.

In a half-hour’s time the swift boat returned. It went with six and came with seven; and the seventh was a woman.

It is not artistic heartlessness, but I wish I could but draw in crayons; for this woman was a most touching sight; and crayons, tracing soft melancholy lines, would best depict the mournful image of the dark-damasked Chola widow.

Her story was soon told, and though given in her



own strange language was as quickly understood; for our captain, from long trading on the Chilian coast, was well versed in the Spanish. A Cholo, or half-breed Indian woman of Payta in Peru, three years gone by, with her young new-wedded husband Felipe, of pure Castilian blood, and her one only Indian brother, Truxill, Hunilla had taken passage on the main in a French whaler, commanded by a joyous man; which vessel, bound to the cruising grounds beyond the Enchanted Isles, proposed passing close by their vicinity. The object of the little party was to procure tortoise oil, a fluid which for its great purity and delicacy is held in high estimation wherever known; and it is well known all along this part of the Pacific coast. With a chest of clothes, tools, cooking utensils, a rude apparatus for trying out the oil, some casks of biscuit, and other things, not omitting two favourite dogs, of which faithful animal all the Cholos are very fond, Hunilla and her companions were safely landed at their chosen place; the Frenchman, according to the contract made ere sailing, engaged to take them off upon returning from a four months' cruise in the westward seas; which interval the three adventurers deemed quite sufficient for their purposes.

On the isle's lone beach they paid him in silver for their passage out, the stranger having declined to carry them at all except upon that condition; though willing to take every means to ensure the due fulfilment of his promise. Felipe had striven hard to have this payment put off to the period of the ship's return. But in vain. Still they thought they had, in another way, ample pledge of the good faith of the Frenchman. It was arranged that the expenses of the passage home should not be payable in silver, but in tortoises; one hundred tortoises ready captured to the returning captain's hand.

These the Cholos meant to secure after their own work was done, against the probable time of the Frenchman's coming back; and no doubt in prospect already felt, that in those hundred tortoises—now somewhere ranging the isle's interior—they possessed one hundred hostages. Enough: the vessel sailed; the gazing three on shore answered the loud glee of the singing crew; and ere evening, the French craft was hull down in the distant sea, its masts three faintest lines which quickly faded from Hunilla's eye.

The stranger had given a blithesome promise, and anchored it with oaths; but oaths and anchors equally will drag; naught else abides on fickle earth but unkept promises of joy. Contrary winds from out unstable skies, or contrary moods of his more varying mind, or shipwreck and sudden death in solitary waves; whatever was the cause, the blithe stranger never was seen again.

Yet, however dire a calamity was here in store, misgivings of it ere due time never disturbed the Cholos' busy minds, now all intent upon the toilsome matter which had brought them hither. Nay, by swift doom coming like a thief in the night, ere seven weeks went by, two of the little party were removed from all anxieties of land or sea. No more they sought to gaze with feverish fear, or still more feverish hope, beyond the present's horizon line; but into the farthest future their own silent spirits sailed. By persevering labour beneath that burning sun, Felipe and Truxill had brought down to their hut many scores of tortoises, and tried out the oil, when, elated with their good success, and to reward themselves for such hard work, they, too hastily, made a catamaran, or Indian raft, much used on the Spanish main, and merrily started on a fishing trip, just without a long reef with many jagged gaps, running parallel with the shore, about half

a mile from it. By some bad tide or hap, or natural negligence of joyfulness (for though they could not be heard, yet by their gestures they seemed singing at the time) forced in deep water against that iron bar, the ill-made catamaran was upset and came all to pieces; when dashed by broad-chested swells between their broken logs and the sharp teeth of the reef, both adventurers perished before Hunilla's eyes.

Before Hunilla's eyes they sank. The real woe of this event passed before her sight as some sham tragedy on the stage. She was seated on a rude bower among the withered thickets, crowning a lofty cliff, a little back from the beach. The thickets were so disposed, that in looking upon the sea at large she peered out from among the branches as from the lattice of a high balcony. But upon the day we speak of here, the better to watch the adventure of those two hearts she loved, Hunilla had withdrawn the branches to one side, and held them so. They formed an oval frame, through which the bluey boundless sea rolled like a painted one. And there, the invisible painter painted to her view the wave-tossed and disjointed raft, its once level logs slantingly upheaved, as raking masts, and the four struggling arms undistinguishable among them; and then all subsided into smooth-flowing creamy waters, slowly drifting the splintered wreck; while first and last, no sound of any sort was heard. Death in a silent picture; a dream of the eye; such vanishing shapes as the mirage shows.

So instant was the scene, so trance-like its mild pictorial effect, so distant from her blasted bower and her common sense of things, that Hunilla gazed and gazed, nor raised a finger or a wail. But as good to sit thus dumb, in stupor staring on that dumb show, for all that otherwise might be done. With half a mile of sea between, how could her two enchanted arms aid those four fated ones? The

distance long, the time one sand. After the lightning is beheld what fool shall stay the thunderbolt? Felipe's body was washed ashore, but Truxill's never came; only his gay, braided hat of golden straw—that same sunflower thing he waved to her, pushing from the strand—and now, to the last gallant, it still saluted her. But Felipe's body floated to the marge, with one arm encirclingly outstretched. Lock-jawed in grim death, the lover-husband softly clasped his bride, true to her even in death's dream. Ah, heaven, when man thus keeps his faith, wilt thou be faithless who created the faithful one? But they cannot break faith who never plighted it.

It needs not to be said what nameless misery now wrapped the lonely widow. In telling her own story she passed this almost entirely over, simply recounting the event. Construe the comment of her features as you might, from her mere words little would you have weened that Hunilla was herself the heroine of her tale. But not thus did she defraud us of our tears. All hearts bled that grief could be so brave.

She but showed us her soul's lid, and the strange ciphers thereon engraved; all within, with pride's timidity, was withheld. Yet was there one exception. Holding out her small olive hand before the captain, she said in mild and slowest Spanish, 'Señor, I buried him'; then paused, struggled as against the writhed coilings of a snake, and cringing suddenly, leaped up, repeating in impassioned pain, 'I buried him, my life, my soul!'

Doubtless, it was by half-conscious, automatic motions of her hands, that this heavy-hearted one performed the final office for Felipe, and planted a rude cross of withered sticks—no green ones might be had—at the head of that lonely grave, where rested now in lasting uncomplaint and quiet haven he whom untranquil seas had overthrown.

But some dull sense of another body that should be interred, of another cross that should hallow another grave—unmade as yet—some dull anxiety and pain touching her undiscovered brother, now haunted the oppressed Hunilla. Her hands fresh from the burial earth, she slowly went back to the beach, with unshaped purposes wandering there, her spell-bound eye bent upon the incessant waves. But they bore nothing to her but a dirge, which maddened her to think that murderers should mourn. As time went by, and these things came less dreamingly to her mind, the strong persuasions of her Romish faith, which sets peculiar store by consecrated urns, prompted her to resume in waking earnest that pious search which had but been begun as in somnambulism. Day after day, week after week, she trod the cindery beach, till at length a double motive edged every eager glance. With equal longing she now looked for the living and the dead; the brother and the captain; alike vanished, never to return. Little accurate note of time had Hunilla taken under such emotions as were hers, and little, outside herself, served for calendar or dial. As to poor Crusoe in the self-same sea, no saint's bell pealed forth the lapse of week or month; each day went by unchallenged; no chanticler announced the sultry dawns, no lowing herds those poisonous nights. All wonted and steadily recurring sounds, human, or humanized by sweet fellowship with man, but one stirred that torrid trance—the cry of dogs; save which naught but the rolling sea invaded it, an all-pervading monotone; and to the widow that was the least loved voice she could have heard.

No wonder, that as her thoughts now wandered to the unreturning ship, and were beaten back again, the hope against hope so struggled in her soul, that at length she desperately said, 'Not yet,

not yet; my foolish heart runs on too fast.' So she forced patience for some further weeks. But to those whom earth's sure indraft draws, patience or impatience is still the same.

Hunilla now sought to settle precisely in her mind, to an hour, how long it was since the ship had sailed; and then, with the same precision how long a space remained to pass. But this proved impossible. What present day or month it was she could not say. Time was her labyrinth, in which Hunilla was entirely lost.

And now follows——

Against my own purposes a pause descends upon me here. One knows not whether nature doth not impose some secrecy upon him who has been privy to certain things. At least, it is to be doubted whether it be good to blazon such. If some books are deemed most baneful and their sale forbid, how, then, with deadlier facts, not dreams of doting men? Those whom books will hurt will not be proof against events. Events, not books, should be forbid. But in all things man sows upon the wind, which bloweth just there where it listeth; for ill or good, man cannot know. Often ill comes from the good, as good from ill.

When Hunilla——

Dire sight it is to see some silken beast long dally with a golden lizard ere she devour. More terrible, to see how feline Fate will sometimes dally with a human soul, and by a nameless magic make it repulse a sane despair with a hope which is but mad. Unwittingly I imp this cat-like thing, sporting with the heart of him who reads; for if he feel not he reads in vain.——

'The ship sails this day, to-day,' at last said Hunilla to herself; 'this gives me certain time to stand on; without certainty I go mad. In loose ignorance I have hoped and hoped; now in firm knowledge I will but

wait. Now I live and no longer perish in bewilderings. Holy Virgin, aid me! Thou wilt waft back the ship. Oh, past length of weary weeks—all to be dragged over—to buy the certainty of to-day, I freely give though I tear ye, ye from me!'

As mariners, tossed in tempest on some desolate ledge, patch them a boat out of the remnants of their vessel's wreck, and launch it on the self-same waves, see here Hunilla, this lone shipwrecked soul, out of treachery invoking trust. Humanity, though strong thing, I worship thee, not in the laurelled victor, but in this vanquished one.

Truly Hunilla leaned upon a reed, a real one; no metaphor; a real eastern reed. A piece of hollow cane, drifted from unknown isles, and found upon the beach, its once jagged ends rubbed smoothly even as by sandpaper; its golden glazing gone. Long ground between the sea and land, upper and nether stone, the unvarnished substance was filed bare, and wore another polish now, one with itself, the polish of its agony. Circular lines at intervals cut all round this surface, divided it into six panels of unequal length. In the first were scored the days, each tenth one marked by a longer and deeper notch; the second was scored for the number of sea-fowl eggs for sustenance, picked out from the rocky nests; the third, how many fish had been caught from the shore; the fourth, how many small tortoises found inland; the fifth, how many days of sun; the sixth, of clouds; which last, of the two, was the greater one. Long nights of busy numbering, misery's mathematics, to weary her too-wakeful soul to sleep; yet sleep for that was none.

The panel of the days was deeply worn—the long tenth notches half effaced, as alphabets of the blind. Ten thousand times the longing widow had traced her finger over the bamboo—dull flute, which played on, gave no sound—as if counting birds

flown by in air would hasten tortoises creeping through the woods.

After the one hundred and eightieth day no further mark was seen; that last one was the faintest, as the first was deepest.

‘There were more days,’ said our captain; ‘many, many more; why did you not go on and notch them, too, Hunilla?’

‘Señor, ask me not.’

‘And meantime, did no other vessel pass the isle?’

‘Nay, Señor;—but——’

‘You do not speak; but *what*, Hunilla?’

‘Ask me not, Señor.’

‘You saw ships pass, far away; you waved to them; they passed on;—was that it, Hunilla?’

‘Señor, be it as you say.’

Braced against her woe, Hunilla would not, durst not trust the weakness of her tongue. Then when our captain asked whether any whaleboats had——

But no, I will not file this thing complete for scoffing souls to quote, and call it firm proof upon their side. The half shall here remain untold. Those two unnamed events which befell Hunilla on this isle, let them abide between her and her God. In nature, as in law, it may be libellous to speak some truths.

Still, how it was that, although our vessel had lain three days anchored nigh the isle, its one human tenant should not have discovered us till just upon the point of sailing, never to revisit so lone and far a spot, this needs explaining ere the sequel come.

The place where the French captain had landed the little party was on the farther and opposite end of the isle. There, too, it was that they had afterwards built their hut. Nor did the widow in her solitude desert the spot where her loved ones had



dwelt with her, and where the dearest of the twain now slept his last long sleep, and all her plaints awakened him not, and he of husbands the most faithful during life.

Now, high broken land rises between the opposite extremities of the isle. A ship anchored at one side is invisible from the other. Neither is the isle so small, but a considerable company might wander for days through the wilderness of one side, and never be seen, or their halloos heard, by any stranger holding aloof on the other. Hence Hunilla, who naturally associated the possible coming of ships with her own part of the isle, might to the end have remained quite ignorant of the presence of our vessel, were it not for a mysterious presentiment, borne to her, so our mariners averred, by this isle's enchanted air. Nor did the widow's answer undo the thought.

'How did you come to cross the isle this morning, then, Hunilla?' said our captain.

'Señor, something came flitting by me. It touched my cheek, my heart, Señor.'

'What do you say, Hunilla?'

'I have said, Señor, something came through the air.'

It was a narrow chance. For when in crossing the isle Hunilla gained the high land in the centre, she must then for the first time have perceived our masts, and also marked that their sails were being loosed, perhaps even heard the echoing chorus of the windlass song. The strange ship was about to sail, and she behind. With all haste she now descends the height on the hither side, but soon loses sight of the ship among the sunken jungles at the mountain's base. She struggles on through the withered branches, which seek at every step to bar her path, till she comes to the isolated rock, still some way from the water. This she climbs, to reassure her-

self. The ship is still in plainest sight. But now, worn out with over tension, Hunilla all but faints; she fears to step down from her giddy perch; she is fain to pause, there where she is, and as a last resort catches the turban from her head, unfurls and waves it over the jungles towards us.

During the telling of her story the mariners formed a voiceless circle round Hunilla and the captain; and when at length the word was given to man the fastest boat, and pull round to the isle's thither side, to bring away Hunilla's chest and the tortoise oil, such alacrity of both cheery and sad obedience seldom before was seen. Little ado was made. Already the anchor had been recommitted to the bottom, and the ship swung calmly to it.

But Hunilla insisted upon accompanying the boat as indispensable pilot to her hidden hut. So being refreshed with the best the steward could supply, she started with us. Nor did ever any wife of the most famous admiral, in her husband's barge, receive more silent reverence of respect than poor Hunilla from this boat's crew.

Rounding many a vitreous cape and bluff, in two hours' time we shot inside the fatal reef; wound into a secret cove, looked up along a green many-gabled lava wall, and saw the island's solitary dwelling.

It hung upon an impending cliff, sheltered on two sides by tangled thickets, and half-screened from view in front by juttings of the rude stairway, which climbed the precipice from the sea. Built of canes, it was thatched with long, mildewed grass. It seemed an abandoned hayrick, whose hay-makers were now no more. The roof inclined but one way; the eaves coming to within two feet of the ground. And here was a simple apparatus to collect the dews, or rather doubly distilled and finest winnowed rains, which, in mercy or in mockery, the night-skies sometimes drop upon these blighted

Encantadas. All along beneath the eaves, a spotted sheet, quite weatherstained, was spread, pinned to short, upright stakes, set in the shallow sand. A small clinker, thrown into the cloth, weighed its middle down, thereby straining all moisture into a calabash placed below. This vessel supplied each drop of water ever drunk upon the isle of the Cholos. Hunilla told us the calabash would sometimes, but not often be half filled overnight. It held six quarts, perhaps. 'But,' said she, 'we were used to thirst. At sandy Payta, where I live, no shower from heaven ever fell; all the water there is brought on mules from the inland vales.'

Tied among the thickets were some twenty moaning tortoises, supplying Hunilla's lonely larder; while hundreds of vast tableted black bucklers, like displaced, shattered tombstones of dark slate, were also scattered round. These were the skeleton backs of those great tortoises from which Felipe and Truxill had made their precious oil. Several large calabashes and two goodly kegs were filled with it. In a pot near by were the caked crusts of a quantity which had been permitted to evaporate. 'They meant to have strained it off next day,' said Hunilla, as she turned aside.

I forgot to mention the most singular sight of all though the first that greeted us after landing.

Some ten small, soft-haired, ringleted dogs, of a beautiful breed, peculiar to Peru, set up a concert of glad welcomings when we gained the breach, which was responded to by Hunilla. Some of these dogs had, since her widowhood, been born upon the isle, the progeny of the two brought from Payta. Owing to the jagged steeps and pitfalls, tortuous thickets, sunken clefts, and perilous intricacies of all sorts in the interior, Hunilla, admonished by the loss of one favourite among them, never allowed these delicate creatures to follow her in her occa-

sional birds'-nests climbs and other wanderings; so that, through long habituation, they offered not to follow, when that morning she crossed the land, and her own soul was then too full of other things to heed their lingering behind. Yet, all along she had so clung to them, that, besides what moisture they lapped up at early daybreak from the small scoop-holes among the adjacent rocks, she had shared the dew of her calabash with them; never laying by any considerable store against those prolonged and utter droughts which, in some disastrous seasons, warp these isles.

Having pointed out, at our desire, what few things she would like transported to the ship—her chest, the oil, not omitting the live tortoises which she intended for a grateful present to our captain—we immediately set to work carrying them to the boat down the long, sloping stair of deeply shadowed rock. While my comrades were thus employed, I looked and Hunilla had disappeared.

It was not curiosity alone, but, it seems to me, something different mixed with it, which prompted me to drop my tortoise, and once more gaze slowly around. I remembered the husband buried by Hunilla's hands. A narrow pathway led into a dense part of the thickets. Following it through many mazes, I came out upon a small, round, open space, deeply chambered there.

The mound rose in the middle; a bare heap of finest sand, like that unverdured heap found at the bottom of an hour-glass run out. At its head stood the cross of withered sticks; the dry, peeled bark still fraying from it; its transverse limb tied up with rope, and forlornly adroop in the silent air.

Hunilla was partly prostrate upon the grave; her dark head bowed, and lost in her long, loosened Indian hair; her hands extended to the cross-foot, with a little brass crucifix clasped between; a crucifix

worn featureless, like an ancient graven knocker long plied in vain. She did not see me, and I made no noise, but slid aside, and left the spot.

A few moments ere all was ready for our going, she reappeared among us. I looked into her eyes, but saw no tears. There was something which seemed strangely haughty in her air, and yet it was the air of woe. A Spanish and an Indian grief, which would not visibly lament. Pride's height in vain abased to proneness on the rack; nature's pride subduing nature's torture.

Like pages the small and silken dogs surrounded her, as she slowly descended towards the beach. She caught the two most eager creatures in her arms: 'Mia Teeta! Mia Tomoteeta!' and fondling them, inquired how many could we take on board.

The mate commanded the boat's crew; not a hard-hearted man, but his way of life had been such that in most things, even in the smallest, simple utility was his leading motive.

'We cannot take them all, Hunilla; our supplies are short; the winds are unreliable; we may be a good many days going to Tombez. So take those you have, Hunilla; but no more.'

She was in the boat; the oarsmen, too, were seated; all save one, who stood ready to push off and then spring himself. With the sagacity of their race, the dogs now seemed aware that they were in the very instant of being deserted upon a barren strand. The gunwales of the boat were high; its prow—presented inland—was lifted; so owing to the water, which they seemed instinctively to shun, the dogs could not well leap into the little craft. But their busy paws hard scraped the prow, as it had been some farmer's door shutting them out from shelter in a winter storm. A clamorous agony of alarm. They did not howl, or whine; they all but spoke.

'Push off! Give way!' cried the mate. The boat

gave one heavy drag and lurch, and next moment shot swiftly from the beach, turned on her heel, and sped. The dogs ran howling along the water's marge, now pausing to gaze at the flying boat, then motioning as if to leap in chase, but mysteriously withheld themselves; and again ran howling along the beach. Had they been human beings, hardly would they have more vividly inspired the sense of desolation. The oars were plied as confederate feathers of two wings. No one spoke. I looked back upon the beach, and then upon Hunilla, but her face was set in a stern dusky calm. The dogs crouching in her lap vainly licked her rigid hands. She never looked behind her; but sat motionless till we turned a promontory of the coast and lost all sights and sounds astern. She seemed as one who, having experienced the sharpest of mortal pangs, was henceforth content to have all lesser heart-strings riven, one by one. To Hunilla, pain seemed so necessary, that pain in other beings, though by love and sympathy made her own, was unrepiningly to be borne. A heart of yearning in a frame of steel. A heart of earthly yearning, frozen by the frost which falleth from the sky.

The sequel is soon told. After a long passage, vexed by calms and baffling winds, we made the little port of Tombez in Peru, there to recruit the ship. Payta was not very distant. Our captain sold the tortoise oil to a Tombez merchant; and adding to the silver a contribution from all hands, gave it to our silent passenger, who knew not what the mariners had done.

The last seen of lone Hunilla she was passing into Payta town, riding upon a small gray ass; and before her on the ass's shoulders, she eyed the jointed workings of the beast's armorial cross.

LOUIS BECKE

1848-1913

THE CHILIAN BLUEJACKET

A TALE OF EASTER ISLAND

ALONE, in the most solitary part of the Eastern Pacific, midway between the earthquake-shaken littoral of Chili and Peru, and the thousand palm-clad islets of the Low Archipelago, lies an island of the days 'when the world was young'. By the lithe-limbed, soft-eyed descendants of the forgotten and mysterious race that once quickened the land, this lonely outlier of the isles of the Southern Seas is called in their soft tongue Rapa-nui, or the Great Rapa.

A hundred and seventy years ago Roggewein, on the dawn of an Easter Sunday, discerned through the misty, tropic haze the grey outlines of an island under his lee beam, and sailed down upon it.

He landed, and even as the grim and hardy old navigator gazed upon and wondered at the mysteries of the strange island, so this day do the cunning men of science who, perhaps once in thirty years, go thither in the vain effort to read the secret of an all-but perished race. And they can tell us but vaguely that the stupendous existing evidences of past glories are of immense and untold age, and show their designers to have been co-eval with the builders of the buried cities of Mexico and Peru; beyond that they can tell us nothing.

Who can solve the problem? What manner of an island king was he who ruled the builders of the

great terraced platforms of stone, the carvers of the huge blocks of lava, the hewers-out with rudest tools of the sphinx-like images of trachyte whose square, massive, and disdainful faces have for unnumbered centuries gazed upwards and outwards over the rolling, sailless swell of the mid-Pacific?

And the people of Rapa-nui of to-day? you may ask. Search the whole Pacific—from Pylstaart, the southern sentinel of the Friendlies, to the one-time buccaneer-haunted, far-away Pelews; thence eastward through the white-beached coral atolls of the Carolines and Marshalls, and southwards to the cloud-capped Marquesas and the sandy stretches of the Paumotu—and you will find no handsomer men or more graceful women than the light-skinned people of Rapa-nui.

Yet are they but the survivors of a race doomed—doomed from the day that Roggewein in his clumsy, high-pooed frigate first saw their land and marvelled at the imperishable relics of a dead greatness. With smiling faces they welcomed him—a stranger from an unknown, outside world, with cutlass at waist and pistol in hand—as a god; he left them a legacy of civilization—a hideous and cruel disease that swept through the amiable and unsuspecting race as an epidemic, and slew its thousands, and sealed with the hand of Death and Silence the eager life that had then filled the square houses of lava in many a town from the wave-beaten cliffs of Terano Kau to Ounipu in the west.

Ask of the people now, ‘Whence came ye? and whose were the hands that fashioned these mighty images and carved upon these stones?’ and in their simple manner they will answer, ‘From Rapa, under the setting sun, came our fathers; and we were then



a great people, even as the *oneone*<sup>1</sup> of the beach. . . . Our Great King was it, he whose name is forgotten by us, that caused these temples and cemeteries and terraces to be built; and it was in his time that the forgotten fathers of our fathers carved from out of the stone of the quarries of Terano Kau the great Silent Faces that gaze for ever upward to the sky. . . . Ai-a-ah! . . . But it was long ago. . . . Ah! a great people were we then in those days, and the wild people to the West called us *Te tagata te pito Henua* (the people who live at the end of the world) . . . and we know no more.'

And here the knowledge and traditions of a broken people begin and end.

# I

A soft, cool morning in November, 187-. Between Ducie and Pitcairn Islands two American whaleships cruise lazily along to the gentle breath of the south-east trades, when the look-out from both vessels see a third sail bearing down upon them. In a few hours she is close enough to be recognized as one of the luckiest sperm whalers of the fleet—the brig *Pocahontas*, of Martha's Vineyard.

Within a quarter of a mile of the two ships—the *Nassau* and the *Dagget*—the new-comer backs her fore-yard and hauls up her mainsail. A cheer rises from the ships. She wants to *gam*, i.e. to gossip. With eager hands four boats are lowered from the two ships, and the captains and second mates of each are racing for the *Pocahontas*.

The skipper of the brig, after shaking hands with his visitors and making the usual inquiries as to their luck, number of days out from New Bed-

<sup>1</sup> Sand.

ford, &c., led the way to his cabin, and, calling his Portuguese steward, had liquor and a box of cigars brought out. The captain of the *Pocahontas* was a little, withered-up old man with sharp, deep-set eyes of brightest blue, and had the reputation of possessing the most fiery and excitable temper of any of the captains of the sixty or seventy American whaleships that in those days cruised the Pacific from the west coast of South America to Guam in the Ladrões.

After drinking some of his potent New England rum with his visitors, and having answered all the queries, the master of the *Pocahontas* inquired if they had seen anything of a Chilian man-of-war farther to the eastward. No, they had not.

‘Then just settle down, gentlemen, for awhile, and I’ll tell you one of the curiosest things that I ever saw or heard of. I’ve logged partiklers of the whole business, and when I get to Oahu (Honolulu) I mean to nar-rate just all I do know to Father Damon of the Honolulu *Friend*. Thar’s nothing like a newspaper fur showin’ a man up when he’s been up to any onnatural villainy and thinks no one will even know anything about it. So just listen and take hold.’

The two captains nodded, and he told them this.

Ten days previously, when close in to barren and isolated Sala-y-Gomez, the *Pocahontas* had spoken the Chilian corvette *O’Higgins*, bound from Easter Island to Valparaiso. The captain of the corvette entertained the American master courteously, and explained his ship’s presence so far to the eastward by stating that the Government had instructed him to call at Easter Island and pick up an Englishman in the Chilian service, who had been sent there to examine and report on the colossal statues and

mysterious carvings of that lonely island. The Englishman, as Commander Gallegos said, was a valued servant of the Republic, and had for some years served in its navy as a surgeon on board *El Almirante Cochrane*, the flagship. He had left Valparaiso in the whaleship *Comboy* with the intention of remaining three months on the island. At the end of that time a war vessel was to call and convey him back to Chili. But in less than two months the Republic was in the throes of a deadly struggle with Peru—here the commander of the *O'Higgins* bowed to the American captain, and, pointing to a huge scar that traversed his bronzed face from temple to chin, said, 'in which I had the honour to receive this, and promotion'—and nearly two years had elapsed ere the Government had time to think again of the English scientist and his mission. Peace restored, the *O'Higgins* was ordered to proceed to the island and bring him back; and as the character of the natives was not well known, and it was feared he might have been killed, Commander Gallegos was instructed to execute summary justice upon the people of the island if such was the case.

But, the Chilian officer said, on reaching the island he had found the natives to be very peaceable and inoffensive, and, although much alarmed at the appearance of his armed landing party from the corvette, they had given him a letter from the Englishman, and had satisfied him that Dr. Francis—— had remained with them for some twelve months only, and had then left the island in a passing whaleship, and Commander Gallegos, making them suitable presents, bade them good-bye, and steamed away for Valparaiso.

This was all the polite little commander had to say, and, after a farewell glass of wine, his visitor

rose to go, when the captain of the corvette casually inquired if the *Pocahontas* was likely to call at the island.

‘I ask you,’ he said in his perfect English, ‘because of one of my men, a bluejacket, who deserted there. You, señor, may possibly meet with him there. Yet he is of no value, and he is not a sailor, and but a lad. He was very ill most of the time, and this was his first voyage. I took him ashore with me in my boat, as he besought me eagerly to do so, and the little devil ran away and hid, or was hidden by the natives.’

‘Why didn’t you get him back?’ asked the captain of the *Pocahontas*.

‘Por Dios! that was easy enough, but ’—and the commander raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders—‘of what use? He was no use to the corvette. Better for him to stay there, and perhaps recover, than to die on board the *O’Higgins* and be thrown to the blue sharks. Possibly, señor, you may find him well, and it may suit you to take him to your good ship and teach him the business of catching the whale. My trade is to show my crew how to fight, and such as he are of no value for that.’

Then the two captains bade each other farewell, and in another hour the redoubtable *O’Higgins*, with a black trail of smoke streaming astern, was ten miles away on her course to Valparaiso.

A week after the *Pocahontas* lay becalmed close in to the lee side of Rapa-nui, and within sight of the houses of the principal village. The captain, always ready to get a ‘green’ hand, was thinking of the chances of his securing the Chilian deserter, and decided to lower a boat and try. Taking four men with him, he pulled ashore and landed at the village of Hagaroa.

. . . . .

## II

Some sixty or seventy natives clustered round the boat as she touched the shore. With smiling faces and outstretched hands they surrounded the captain and pressed upon him their simple gifts of ripe bananas and fish baked in leaves, begging him to first eat a little and then walk with them to Mataveri, their largest village, distant a mile, where preparations were being made to welcome him formally. The skipper, nothing loth, bade his crew not to go too far away in their rambles, and, accompanied by his boat-steerer, was about to set off with the natives, when he remembered the object of his visit, and asked a big, well-made woman, the only native present that could speak English, 'Where is the man you hid from the man-of-war?'

There was a dead silence, and for nearly half a minute no one spoke. The keen blue eyes of the American looked from one face to another inquiringly, and then settled on the fat, good-natured features of Varua, the big woman.

Holding her hands, palms upwards, to the captain, she endeavoured to speak, and then, to his astonishment, he saw that her dark eyes were filled with tears. And then, as if moved with some sudden and sorrowful emotion, a number of other women and young girls, murmuring softly in pitying tones, '*E matè! E matè!*'<sup>1</sup> came to his side and held their hands out to him with the same supplicating gesture.

The captain was puzzled. For all his island wanderings and cruises he had no knowledge of any Polynesian dialect, and the tearful muteness of the fat Varua was still unbroken. At last she placed one hand on his sleeve, and, pointing landward with the other, said, in her gentle voice, 'Come,' and taking

<sup>1</sup> 'Dead! Dead!'

his hand in hers, she led the way, the rest of the people following in silence.

For about half a mile they walked behind the captain and his boat-steerer and the woman Varua without uttering a word. Presently Varua stopped and called out the name of 'Taku' in a low voice.

A fine, handsome native, partly clothed in European sailor's dress, stepped apart from the others and came to her.

Turning to the captain, she said, 'This is Taku the Sailor. He can speak a little English and much Spanish. I tell him now to come with us, for he hath a paper.'

Although not understanding the relevancy of her remark, the captain nodded, and then with gentle insistence Varua and the other women urged him on, and they again set out.

A few minutes more, and they were at the foot of one of the massive-stoned and ancient *papaku*, or cemeteries, on the walls of which were a number of huge images carved from trachyte, and representing the trunk of the human body. Some of the figures bore on their heads crowns of red tufa, and the aspect of all was towards the ocean. At the foot of the wall of the *papaku* were a number of prone figures, with hands and arms sculptured in low relief, the outspread fingers clasping the hips.

About a cable length from the wall stood two stone houses—memorials of the olden time—and it was to these that Varua and the two white men, attended now by women only, directed their steps.

The strange, unearthly stillness of the place, the low whispers of the women, the array of colossal figures with sphinx-like faces set to the sea, and the unutterable air of sadness that enwrapped the whole scene overawed even the unimagi-native mind of the

rough whaling captain, and he experienced a curious feeling of relief when his gentle-voiced guide entered through the open doorway the largest of the two houses, and, in a whisper, bade him follow.

A delightful sense of coolness was his first sensation on entering, and then with noiseless step the other women followed and seated themselves on the ground.

Still clasping his hand, Varua led him to the farther end of the house and pointed to a motionless figure that lay on a couch of mats, covered with a large piece of navy-blue calico. At each side of the couch sat a young native girl, and their dark, luminous eyes, shining star-like from out the wealth of black, glossy hair that fell upon their bronzed shoulders, turned wonderingly upon the stranger who had broken in upon their watch.

Motioning the girls aside, Varua released her hold of the white man's hand and drew the cloth from off the figure, and the seaman's pitying glance fell upon the pale, sweet features of a young white girl.

But for the unmistakable pallid hue of death he thought at first that she slept. In the thin, delicate hands, crossed upon her bosom, there was placed, after the manner of those of her faith, a small metal crucifix. Her hair, silky and jet black, was short like a man's, and the exquisitely modelled features, which even the coldness of death had not robbed of their beauty, showed the Spanish blood that, but a few hours before, had coursed through her veins.

Slowly the old seaman drew the covering over the still features, and, with an unusual emotion stirring his rude nature, he rose, and, followed by Varua, walked outside and sat upon a broken pillar of lava that lay under the wall of the *papaku*.

Calling his boat-steerer, he ordered him to return to the beach and go off to the ship with instructions to the mate to have a coffin made as quickly as possible and send it ashore; and then, at a glance from Varua, who smiled a grave approval as she listened to his orders, he followed her and the man she called Taku into the smaller of the two houses.

Round about the inside walls of this ancient dwelling of a forgotten race were placed a number of seamen's chests made of cedar and camphor wood—the *lares* and *penates* of most Polynesian houses. The gravelled floor was covered with prettily ornamented mats of *fala* (the screw-palm).

Seating herself, with Taku the Sailor, on the mats, Varua motioned the captain to one of the boxes, and then told him a tale that moved him—rough, fierce, and tyrannical as was his nature—to the deepest pity.

. . . . .

### III

'It is not yet twenty days since the fighting *pahi* *afi* (steamer) came here, and we of Mataveri saw the boat full of armed men land on the beach at Hagaroa. Filled with fear were we; but yet as we had done no wrong we stood on the beach to welcome. And, ere the armed men had left the boat, we knew them to be the *Sipaniola* from Chili—the same as those that came here ten years ago in three ships and seized and bound three hundred and six of our men and carried them away for slaves to the land of the Tae Manu, and of whom none but four ever returned to Rapa-nui. And then we trembled again.'

(She spoke of the cruel outrage of 1862, when three Peruvian slave-ships took away over three hundred islanders to perish on the guano-fields of the Chincha Islands.)



‘ The chief of the ship was a little man, and he called out to us in the tongue of Chili, ‘ Have no fear ’, and took a little gun from out its case of skin that hung by his side and giving it to a man in the boat, stepped over to us and took our hands in his.

“ Is there none among ye that speak my tongue? ” he said quickly.

‘ Now, this man here, Taku the Sailor, speaketh the tongue of Chili, but he feared to tell it, lest they might take him away for a sailor; so he held his lips tight.

‘ Then I, who for six years dwelt with English people at Tahiti, was pushed forward by those behind me and made to talk in English; and lo! the little man spoke in your tongue even as quick as he did in that of Chili. And then he told us that he came for Farani.<sup>1</sup>

‘ Now this Farani was a young white man of *Peretania* (England), big and strong. He came to us a year and a half ago. He was rich and had with him chests filled with presents for us of Rapa-nui; and he told us that he came to live awhile among us, and look upon the houses of stone and the Faces of the Silent that gaze out upon the sea. For a year he dwelt with us and became as one of ourselves and we loved him; and then because no ship came he began to weary and be sad. At last a ship—like thine, one that hunts for the whale—came, and Farani called us together, and placed a letter in the hands of the chief at Mataveri and said, “ If it so be that a ship cometh from Chili give these my words to the captain, and all will be well.” Then he bade us farewell and was gone.

‘ All this I said in quick words, and then we gave to the little fighting chief the letter Farani had

<sup>1</sup> Frank.

written. When he had counted the words in the letter he said, "*Bueno*, it is well," and called to his men, and they brought out many gifts for us from the boat—cloth, and garments for men and women, and two great bags of canvas filled with tobacco. *Ai-a-ah!* many presents he gave us; this because of the good words Farani had set down in the letter. Then the little chief said to me, "Let these my men walk where they list, and I will go with thee to Mataveri and talk with the chief."

' So the sailors came out of the boats carrying their guns and swords in their hands, but the little chief, whose *avagutu* (moustache) stuck out on each side of his face like the wings of a flying-fish when it leaps in terror from the mouth of the hungry bonito, spoke angrily, and they laid their guns and swords back in the boats.

' So the sailors went hither and thither with our young men and girls; and, although at that time I knew it not, she who now is not, was one of them, and walked alone.

' Then I, and Taku the Sailor, and the little sea-chief came to the houses of Mataveri, and he stayed awhile and spoke good words to us. And we, although we fear the men of Chili for the wrong they once did us, were yet glad to listen, for we also are of their faith.

' As we talked, there came inside the house a young girl named Temeteri, whom, when Farani had been with us for two months, he had taken for wife, and she bore him a son. But from the day that he had sailed away she became sick with grief; and when, after many months, she had told me that Farani had said he would return to her, my heart was heavy; for I know the ways of white men with us women of brown skins. Yet I feared to tell her he lied and would return no more. Now, this girl

Temeteri was sought after by a man named Huarani, the son of Heremai, who desired to marry her now that Farani had gone, and he urged her to question the chief of the fighting ship and ask him if Farani would return.

‘ So I spoke of Temeteri. He laughed and shook his head, and said, “ Nay, Farani the Englishman will return no more; but yet one so beautiful as she,” and he pointed to Temeteri, “ should have many lovers and know no grief. Let her marry again and forget him; and this is my marriage gift to her,” and he threw a big golden coin upon the mat on which the girl sat.

‘ She took it in her hand and threw it far out through the doorway with bitter words, and rose and went away to her child.

‘ Then the little captain went back to the boat and called his men to him, and lo! one was gone. Ah! he was angry, and a great scar that ran down one side of his face grew red with rage. But soon he laughed and said to us, “ See, there be one of my people hidden away from me. Yet he is but a boy and sick; and I care not to stay and search for him. Let him be thy care so that he wanders not away and perishes among the broken lava; he will be in good hands among the people of Rapa-nui.” With that he bade us farewell, and in but a little time the great fighting ship had gone away to the rising sun.

‘ All that day and the next we searched, but found not him who had hidden away; but in the night of the second day, when it rained heavily, and Taku (who is my brother’s son) and I and my two children worked at the making of a *kupega* (net), he whom we had sought came to the door. And as we looked our hearts were filled with pity, for as he put out his hands to us he staggered and fell to the ground.

‘ So Taku—who is a man of a good heart—and I lifted him up and carried him to a bed of soft mats, and as I placed my hand on his bosom to see if he was dead, lo! it was soft as a woman’s, and I saw that the stranger was a young girl!

‘ I took from her the wet garments and brought warm clothes of *mamoe* (blankets), and Taku made a great fire, and we rubbed her cold body and her hands and feet till her life came back to her again, and she sat up and ate a little beaten-up taro. When the night and the dawn touched she slept again.

‘ The sun was high when the white girl awoke, and fear leapt into her eyes when she saw the house filled with people who came to question Taku and me about the stranger. With them came the girl Temeteri, whose head was still filled with foolish thoughts of Farani, her white lover.

‘ I went to her, put my arm around her, and spoke, but though she smiled and answered in a little voice, I understood her not, for I knew none of the tongue of Chili. But yet she leaned her head against my bosom, and her eyes that were as big and bright as Fetuaho, the star of the morning, looked up into mine and smiled through their tears.

‘ There was a great buzzing of talk among the women. Some came to her and touched hands and forehead, and said, “ Let thy trembling cease; we of Rapa-nui will be kind to the white girl.”

‘ And as the people thronged about her and talked she shook her head, and her eyes sought mine and hot tears plashed upon my hand. Then the mother of Temeteri raised her voice and called to Taku the Sailor and said, “ O Taku, thou who knowest her tongue, ask her of Farani, my white son, the husband of my daughter.”

. . . . .

‘ The young girls in the house laughed scornfully at old Pohère, for some of them had loved Farani, who yet had put them all aside for Temeteri, whose beauty exceeded theirs; and so they hated her and laughed at her mother. Then Taku, being pressed by old Pohère, spoke in the tongue of Chili—but not of Temeteri.

‘ Ah! She sprang to her feet and talked then, and the flying words chased one another from her lips; and these things told she to Taku:—She had hidden among the broken lava and watched the little captain come back to the boat and bid us farewell. Then when night came she had crept out and gone far over to the great *papaku*, and lay down to hide again, for she feared the fighting ship might return to seek her. And all that day she lay hidden in the lava till night fell upon her again, and hunger drove her to seek the faces of men. In the rain she all but perished, till God brought her feet to this my house.

‘ Then said Taku the Sailor, “ Why didst thou flee from the ship? ”

‘ The white girl put her hands to her face and wept, and said, “ Bring me my jacket.”

‘ I gave to her the blue sailor’s jacket, and from inside of it she took a little flat thing and placed it in her bosom.

‘ Again said old Pohère to Taku, “ O man of slow tongue, ask her of Farani.” So he asked in this wise:

‘ “ See, O White Girl, that is Pohère, the mother of Temeteri, who bore a son to the white man that came here to look upon the Silent Faces; and because he came from thy land, and because of the heart of Temeteri which is dried up for love of him does this foolish old woman ask thee if thou hast seen him; for long months ago he left Rapa-nui. In our tongue we call him Farani.”

'The girl looked at Taku the Sailor, and her lips moved, but no words came. Then from her bosom she took the little flat thing and held it to him, but sickness was in her hand so that it trembled, and that which she held fell to the ground. So Taku stooped and picked it up from where it lay on the mat and looked, and his eyes blazed, and he shouted out "*Aue!*" for it was the face of Farani that looked into his! And as he held it up in his hand to the people they, too, shouted in wonder; and then the girl Temeteri cast aside those that stood about her and tore it from his hand and fled.

"Who is she?" said the white girl, in a weak voice to Taku, "and why hath she robbed me of that which is dear to me?" and Taku was ashamed and turned his face away from her because of two things—his heart was sore for Temeteri, who is a blood relation, and was shamed because her white lover had deserted her; and he was full of pity for the white girl's tears. So he said naught.

'The girl raised herself and her hand caught Taku by the arm, and these were her words: "O man, for the love of Jesu Christ, tell me what was this woman Temeteri to my husband?"

'Now Taku the Sailor was sore troubled, and felt it hard to hurt her heart, yet he said, "Was Farani, the Englishman, thy husband?"

'She wept again, "He was my husband."

"Why left he one as fair as thee?" said Taku, in wonder.

'She shook her head. "I know not, except he loved to look upon strange lands; yet he loved me."

"He is a bad man," said Taku. "He loved others as well as thee. The girl that fled but now with his picture was wife to him here. He loved her and she bore him a son."

'The girl's head fell on my shoulder and her eyes

closed, and she became as dead, and lo! in a little while as she strove to speak blood poured from her mouth and ran down over her bosom.

“ It is the hand of Death,” said Taku the Sailor.

Where she now lies, there died she, at about the hour when the people of Vaihou saw the sails of thy ship.

‘ We have no priest here, for the good father that was here three years ago is now silent; yet did Taku and I pray with her. And ere she was silent she said she would set down some words on paper; so Alrēma, my little daughter, hastened to Mataveri, and the chief sent back some paper and *vai tuhi* (ink) that had belonged to the good priest. So with weak hand she set down some words, but even as she wrote she rose up and threw out her hands, and called out, “ Francisco, Francisco! ” and fell back, and was silent for ever.’

#### IV

The captain of the *Pocahontas* dashed the now fast-falling tears from his eyes, and with his rough old heart swelling with pity for the poor wanderer, took from Taku the sheet of paper on which the heartbroken girl’s last words were traced.

Ere he could read it a low murmur of voices outside told him his crew had returned. They carried a rude wooden shell; and then with bared heads the captain and boat-steerer entered the house where she lay.

Again the old man raised the piece of navy-blue cloth from off the sweet, sad face, and a heavy tear dropped down upon her forehead. Then, aided by the gentle, sympathetic women, his task was soon finished, and two of his crew entered and carried

their burden to its grave. Service there was none; only the prayers and tears of the brown women of Rapa-nui.

Ere he said farewell the captain of the whaleship placed money in the hands of Varua and Taku. They drew back, hurt and mortified. Seeing his mistake, the seaman desired Varua to give the money to the girl Temeteri.

'Nay, sir,' said Varua, 'she would but give me bitter words. Even when she who is now silent was not yet cold Temeteri came to the door of the house where she lay and spat twice on the ground, and taking up gravel in her hand cast it at her and cursed her in the name of our old heathen gods. And as for money, we here in Rapa-nui need it not. May Christ protect thee on the sea. Farewell!'

The captain of the *Pocahontas* rose and came to the cabin table, and motioning to his guests to fill their glasses, said——

'Tis a real sad story, gentlemen, and if I should ever run across Doctor Francis —— I should talk some to him. But see here. Here is my log; my mate, who is a fancy writist, wrote it at my dictation. I can't show you the letter that the pore creature herself wrote; that I ain't going to show to any one.'

The two captains rose and stood beside him and read the entry in the log of the *Pocahontas*.

'November 28, 187-.

'This day I landed at Easter Island, to try and obtain as a "green" hand a young Chilian seaman who, the captain of the Chilian corvette *O'Higgins* informed me, had run away there. On landing I was shown the body of a young girl, whom the natives stated to be the deserter. She had died that



morning. Buried her as decently as circumstances would permit. From a letter she wrote on the morning of her death I learned her name to be Señora Teresa T——. Her husband, Dr. Francis T——, was an Englishman in the service of the Chilian Republic. He was sent out on a scientific mission to the island, and his wife followed him in the *O'Higgins* disguised as a bluejacket. I should take her to have been about nineteen years of age.

‘ SPENCE ELDRIDGE, Master.

‘ MANUAL LEGASPE, 2nd officer.

‘ Brig *Pocahontas* of Martha's Vineyard, U.S.A.’

‘ Well, that 's curious now,’ said the skipper of the *Nassau*, ‘ why, I knew that man. He left the island in the *King Darius*, of New Bedford, and landed at Ponape in the Caroline Group, whar those underground ruins are at Metalanien Harbour. Guess he wanted to potter around there a bit. But he got inter some sorter trouble among the natives there an' he got shot.’

‘ Aye,’ said the captain of the *Dagget*, ‘ I remember the affair. I was mate of the *Josephine*, and we were lying at Jakoits Harbour when he was killed, and now I remember the name too. Waal, he wasn't much account anyhow.’

· · · · ·  
Ten years ago a wandering white man stood, with Taku the Sailor, at the base of the wall of the great *papaku*, and the native pointed out the last resting-place of the wanderer. There, under the shadow of the Silent Faces of Stone, the brave and loving heart that dared so much is at peace for ever.

## THE GREAT CRUSHING AT MOUNT SUGAR-BAG

### A QUEENSLAND MINING TALE

‘LET’s sling it, boys. There’s no fun in our bullocking here day after day and not making tucker! I’m sick to death of the infernal hole, and mean to get out of it.’

‘So am I, Ned. I was sick of it a month ago,’ said Harry Durham, filling his pipe and flinging himself down at full length upon his luxurious couch—a corn-sack suspended between four posts driven into the earthen floor of the hut. ‘I’m ready to chuck it up to-morrow and drive a mob of nanny-goats to the Palmer, like young Preston did the other day.’<sup>1</sup>

‘How much do we owe that old divil Ikey now?’ said Rody Minogue, the third man of the party, who sat at the open doorway looking out upon the disreputable collection of bark humpies that constituted the played-out mining township of Mount Sugar-bag.

‘About £70 now,’ said Durham; ‘but against that he’s got our five horses. The old beast means to shut down on us, I can see that plainly enough. When I went to him on Saturday for the tucker he had a face on him as long as a child’s coffin.’

‘Look here, boys,’ said Buller, the pessimist, ‘let the infernal old vampire keep our three saddle-horses—they are worth more than seventy quid—and be hanged to him. We’ll have the two pack-horses left. Let us sell one, and with the other to carry our swags, we’ll foot it to Cleveland Bay, or Bowen, I don’t care which.’

<sup>1</sup> In the early days of the rush to the Palmer River Goldfield nanny-goats brought £2 10s. each.

'An' what are we goin' to do whin we get there?' asked Rody.

Buller shrugged his shoulders. 'Dashed if I know, Rody; walk up and down Bowen jetty and watch the steamers come in.'

'And live on pack-horse meat,' said Durham.

'Now, look here,' and Rody got up from the doorway and sat upon the rough table in the middle of the room, 'I want you fellows to listen to me. First of all, tell me this: Isn't it through me entirely that we've managed to get tick from old Ikey Cohen at all?'

'Right,' said Durham; 'no one but you, Rody, would have had courage enough to make love to greasy-faced Mrs. Ikey.'

'Don't be ungrateful. Every time I've been to the place I've sympathized with her hard lot in being tied to an uncongenial mate like Ikey Cohen, and for every half a dozen times I've squeezed her hand you fellows have to thank me for a sixpenny plug of sheep-wash tobacco.'

'By Heavens! how you must have suffered for that tin of baking-powder that we got last week, and which didn't go down in the bill!'

Rody laughed good-naturedly.

'Well, perhaps I did. But never mind poking fun at me, I'm talking seriously now. Here we are, stone-broke, and divil a chance can I see of our getting on to anything good at Sugar-bag. We've got about forty tons of stone at grass, haven't we? What do you think it'll go?'

'About fifteen pennyweights,' said Durham.

'I say ten,' said Buller.

'And I say it's going to be the biggest crushing on Sugar-bag since the old days,' said Rody.

'Rot!' said Durham.

'Now just you wait and listen to what I've got to say. We've got forty tons at grass now. Now, we

won't get a show to crush for some weeks, because there's Tom Doyle's lot and then Patterson's to go through first. It's no use asking old Fryer to put our stuff through before theirs. Besides, we don't want him to.'

'Don't we? I think we want to get out of this God-forsaken hole as quick as we can.'

'So we do. But getting our stuff through first won't help us away. Reckon it up, my boys! Forty tons, even if it goes an ounce, means only about £140. Out of that old Cohen gets £70—just half, that would leave us £70; out of this we shall have to give Fryer £40 for crushing. That leaves us £30.'

'That'll take us to Townsville or Cooktown, anyway,' said Durham.

'Yes,' said Rody, 'if we get it. But we won't. That stone isn't going to crush for more than ten pennyweights to the ton.'

A dead silence followed. Rody was the oldest and most experienced miner of them all, and knew what he was talking about. Then Buller groaned.

'That means, then, that after we've paid Fryer £40 for his crushing we'll have £30 for old Cohen and nothing for ourselves.'

'That's it, Ned.'

No one spoke for a moment, until Durham, who had good Scriptural knowledge, began cursing King Pharaoh for not crossing the Red Sea first in boats and blocking Moses and his crowd from landing on the other side.

'Well, wait a minute,' resumed Rody, 'I haven't finished yet. We gave our mokes to old Cohen, didn't we, as a guarantee? He said he'd send them to Dotswood Station, because there was no feed here. What do you think the old beast did?'

'Sold 'em,' said Buller.

'No, he'd hardly be game to do that. But instead of sending them to Dotswood, he's got the two

pack-horses running the mail coach between the Broughton and Charters Towers, and the three saddle-horses are getting their hides ridden off them carrying the mail between Cleveland Bay (Townsville) and Bowen.'

'The infernal old sweep!' said Durham, springing up from his bunk. 'Who told you this, Rody? Greasy-face?'

'My informant, Mr. Durham, was Mrs. Isaac Cohen, or, as you so vulgarly but truly call her, "Greasy-face".'

Presently, after taking due notice of his mates' wrathful visages, Rody began again——

'So this is how the matter stands. We three fellows, who are working like thundering idiots to pay off old Ikey's store account, are actually running a coach for him, and conveying Her Majesty's mails for him, and he gets the money! Now, I don't want to do anything wrong, but I'm hanged if I'm going to let him bilk us, and if you two will do what I want we will get even with him. But you'll have to promise me to do just exactly what I tell you. Are you willing?'

'Right you are, Rody. Go ahead.'

'I'm not going into details just at present, but I can promise you that we'll leave Sugar-bag in a month, or less, from to-night, with £50 each. And old Ikey is going to give it to us; and what is more, he won't dare to ask us to give it back again.'

'How are you going to do it?'

'You'll know when the proper time comes. But from to-morrow fortnight we don't raise a bit more stone from our duffing old claim. We're going to start on those big mullocky leaders in Mason's and Crow's old shafts, and raise about ten tons before we crush the stone. We must have it ready at the battery as soon as the stone is through. Now, there you are again, making objections. I know that it

didn't go six pennyweights, but it's going to be powerful rich this time.'

Mr. Isaac Cohen was the sole business man at Mount Sugar-bag, and although the majority of the miners working the claims on the field were not doing well, Mr. Cohen was. In addition to being the only storekeeper and publican within a radius of fifty miles, he was also the butcher, baker, and saddler, this last vocation having been his original means of livelihood for many years in Sydney. A small investment, however, in some Northern Queensland mining shares led him on the road to fortune, and although never entirely forsaking his old trade, by steady industry and a rigid avoidance of such luxuries as soap and a change of clothing, he gradually accumulated enough money to add several other businesses to that of saddlery. He had arrived at Sugar-bag when that ephemeral township was in the zenith of its glory, and now, although it was on the eve of the days that lead to abandoned shafts and grass-grown, silent crushing mills, wherein wandering goats camp on the water tables, and death adders and carpet snakes crawl up the nozzle of the bellows in the blacksmith's forge to hibernate, he still remained. No doubt he would have left long before had it not been for the fact that the remaining ninety or a hundred miners in the place were all in his debt. Then, besides this, he had bought a mob of travelling cattle and stocked a block of country with them. The drover in charge, a fatuous young Scotchman, with large, watery-blue eyes and red hair, had succumbed to Ikey's alleged whisky and the news that there was no water ahead of him for another sixty miles. Ikey buried him decently (sending the bill home to the young man's relations, including the cost of the liquor so freely consumed on the mournful occasion) and took

charge of the cattle, at the same time writing to the owners and informing them that their cattle were dying by hundreds, and advising them to place them in the hands of an agent for sale. And to show Mr. Cohen's integrity, it may be mentioned that he named Mr. Andrew M'Tavish, the local auctioneer, as a suitable person, but neglected to state that Mr. M'Tavish had died in Bowen hospital a month previously, and that Ikey Cohen had bought his business. Consequently the cattle went cheap, and Ikey bought them himself. Thus by honest industry he prospered, while every one else in Sugar-bag went to the wall—i.e. the bar of Ikey Cohen's Royal Hotel. And at the bar they were always welcome, for even if—as sometimes did occur—a disheartened, stone-broke customer drank too much of Mr. Cohen's irregular whisky and died in his back-yard, leaving a few shillings recorded against his name on the bar-room slate, Ikey forgave the corpse the debt and buried him (he was the Mount Sugar-bag undertaker) for the trifling sum of £10—paid by sending round the hat on the day of the funeral. In due course Ikey was made a J.P., and then began to think of Parliament.

About two years after his arrival at Sugar-bag, Ikey had occasion to visit Townsville on business, and on his return was accompanied by his newly wedded wife, a Brisbane-dressed lady of thirty or so. Somewhat to his surprise, a number of the miners at Sugar-bag who had, during their travels, visited the southern capitals, greeted her as an old friend, and congratulated him on securing such an excellent life-partner; and, as he had married the lady after only a few days' acquaintance, he naturally enough accepted her explanation of having presided over various bars in Melbourne and Sydney, where she had met a great number of Queenslanders. Of course there were not wanting,

even at Sugar-bag, evil-minded beings to openly assert that Mr. Cohen's expression of surprise at the wide circle of his wife's friends was all bunkum, and that 'Greasy-face', as the lady was nicknamed, was only another of his cute financial investments.

If this was correct it certainly showed his sound judgement, for her presence in the bar of the Royal proved highly lucrative to him; and showed as well that he was above any feelings of unworthy jealousy. For although the title of 'Greasy-face' was not altogether an inappropriate one, the bride was by no means bad-looking, and possessed to a very great degree that peculiar charm of manner and freedom from stiff conventionality so noticeable among the fair sex on new rushes to goldfields. Perhaps, however, Mr. Cohen did think that her preference for Rody Minogue was a little too openly shown to the neglect of his other customers and her admirers; but, being a business man, and devoid of sentiment, he said nothing, but charged Rody and his mates stiffer prices for the rations he sold them, and was quite satisfied.

On the morning after the three mates had discussed their precarious condition, Rody, instead of going up to the claim with Durham and Buller, remained in camp to write a letter. It was addressed to 'Mr. James Kettle, c/o Postmaster, Adelong, N.S. Wales', and contained an earnest request, for old friendship's sake, to send Mr. Harry Durham a telegram, as per copy enclosed, as quickly as possible.

Then, lighting his pipe, Rody left the hut, and walked up towards the Royal. When about half-way he sat down on a log and waited for the mailman, who he knew would be passing along presently on his way down to Cleveland Bay. He had intended to go up to Cohen's the previous evening and write and post his letters there, but Ikey being the post-



master, and Rody a particularly cute individual, the latter changed his mind. The mailman usually slept at Cohen's on his way down to the bay, and being a good-natured and convivial soul, and a fellow-countryman of Rody, the two were on very good terms.

Presently Rody saw him ride out of Cohen's yards, leading a pack-horse, and turn down the track which led past the place where he was waiting.

'How are you, Dick?' said Rody; 'pull up a minute, will you? I've got a letter here I want you to post for me in Townsville. It's not good enough leaving a letter in old Ikey's over night.'

'Right,' said the mailman, taking the letter; 'want anything else done, Rody?'

'Yes; would you mind bringing me out as much lead as you can carry when you come back, 40 or 50 lb. Don't bring it to the humpy; just dump it down here behind this log, where I can get it. I'll pay you for it in a week or two; and buy me a horse-shoer's rasp as well.'

'O.K., old man. I can get it easily enough, and drop it here for you when I come back on Thursday. So long'; and Dick the mailman jogged off.

Ten minutes later Rody sauntered up to Mr. Ikey Cohen's store. Mrs. Isaac was there, opening a box of mixed groceries.

'Hallo, Rody! how are you? Here, quick; stick this in your shirt before the little beast comes in'; and 'Greasy-face' pushed a bottle of pickles into his hand, just as Ikey entered—in time to see the pickles.

'Not at work this morning, Mr. Minogue?'

'No; I've come up to have a bit of a chat with you. How much are the pickles, Mrs. Cohen?'

'Two shillings, Mr. Minogue,' she answered, with a world of sorrow expressed in the quick glance she gave him, knowing that Ikey had detected her.

‘How was the claim shaping?’ asked Ikey, presently.

Rody shook his head. ‘Just the same. We don’t like the look of the stone at all. Of course the gold is as fine as flour, and you can’t tell what it’s going to turn out till you get it under the stampers. We are thinking of raising some of that mullocky stuff out of Mason’s and Crow’s old claims. We got some good prospects lately.’

‘Vell, you’d better do somedings pretty qvick. I can’t go on subblying you and your mates vid rations for noding,’ said Mr. Cohen, with an unpleasant look on his face. He was not in a pleasant temper, for he disliked Rody and his mates—the former in particular—and would have shut down on them long before only for the fact that all three men were such favourites on the field that an action like this would have meant a big hole in his bar profits.

‘That’s true enough,’ said Rody, with apparent humility, but with a look in his eye that had Ikey noticed it would have made him step back out of his reach, ‘and I’ve come to have a talk with you on the matter. Will you mind just showing us how we stand?’

‘Here you are; here’s your ackound up to the tay pefore yestertay—the last of the month,’ and the storekeeper handed him the bill.

Rody looked at it—£70 10s. 6d.

‘You charge us pretty stiff, Mr. Cohen, for some of the tucker and powder and fuse.’

‘Vell, ven you can’t bay gash!’ and the little man humped his shoulders and spread his ten dirty fingers wide out.

Rody continued to scrutinize the items on the bill. ‘We’re paying pretty stiff for keeping those mokes at Dotswood—eight quid is a lot of money when we get no use out of ’em.’

'Vy, you vas full of grumbles. Vat haf you to comblain of? 'Thirty-two veeks' grass and vater for five horses at a shilling a veek each. My friend, if dose horses had not gone to Dotswood dey would haf died here.'

'All right,' said Rody, putting the bill in his pocket and turning to go, 'as soon as Doyle and Patterson's stuff goes through, our crushing follows. They start to-day.'

'Vell, I hopes ve do some good,' snorted Cohen, as he sat down to his accounts.

'What the blazes is that for?' said Buller, as late on Thursday night Rody came into the hut and dumped a small but extremely heavy parcel, tied up in a piece of bagging, down on the table.

Rody cut the string that tied it, and the mates saw that it contained a compact roll of sheet lead and a farrier's rasp.

'Never you mind; I know what I'm doing. Now, boys, we're got to slog into that mullocky stuff at Mason's all next week, and look jolly mysterious if any of the chaps tell us we're only bullocking for nothing.'

A light began to dawn on Durham as he looked at the rasp and lead; a few days before he had seen Rody bringing home an old worn-out blacksmith's vice that he had picked up somewhere, and stow it under his bunk.

Taking up the articles again, Rody stowed them away, and then drew a letter out of his pocket.

'Read that,' he said.

Durham took it up and read aloud——

'DOTSWOOD STATION, BURDEKIN RIVER,  
'June 7, 188—.

'DEAR SIR—In reply to your note, I beg to state that no horses with the brands described by you

have ever been received on this station from Mr. Isaac Cohen, nor any other person.

‘Yours, &c.,

‘WALTER D. JOYCE,

‘MR. RODY MINOGUE,

‘*Manager.*

‘*Sugar-bag.*’

‘The thundering old sweep! Why, we could jail him for this,’ said Durham. ‘Are you quite sure about his using them ever since he took delivery of them?’

‘Quite; I can bring a dozen people to prove that the two pack-horses have been running in the Charters Towers coach for the past six months, and the three saddle-horses have been carrying the Bowen mail from Townsville for five months.’

Durham thumped his fist on the table. ‘I wish we could get him to tell us before a witness that the horses were at Dotswood.’

‘We needn’t bother; this is better,’ and Rody, taking out Cohen’s account, read—

‘To 32 weeks’ agistment for 5 horses at Dotswood Station, at 1s. per week—£8.’

‘That’s lovely, Rody. We’ve got him now.’

For the next week or so the three mates worked hard at Mason’s and Crow’s old shafts, to the wonder of the rest of the diggers at Sugar-bag. And they would have been still more surprised had they gone one Sunday into a thick scrub about a mile from the camp, and seen Rody Minogue fix an old vice on a stump, and spreading a bag beneath it, produce a rasp, and begin to vigorously file a thick roll of lead into fine shavings, that fell like a shower of silver spray upon the bag beneath.

Rody spent the best part of the day in the scrub. He had brought his dinner, and enjoyed his laborious task. As soon as it was finished he carefully poured

the bright filings into a canvas bag, and threw the vice and rasp far into the scrub. Then, just at dusk, he carried the heavy bag home unobserved.

That night, as they turned in, he said to his mates——

‘ We must all be up at old Ikey’s to-morrow night, boys, to see the mailman come in. I think we are pretty sure to get Jim Kettle’s wire to-night. I asked him to send it at once.’

It may be mentioned here that although there was no telegraph station at Sugar-bag, there was at Big Boulder, a small but thriving mining township five miles away, and telegrams sent to any one at Sugar-bag were sent on by the postmaster at Big Boulder by Dick the mailman.

‘ Here’s Dick the mailman coming!’ and the crowd of diggers that sat in Ikey Cohen’s bar lounged outside to see him dismount.

In a few minutes he came inside, and first handing the small bag that contained the Sugar-bag mail to Mr. Cohen, who at once, by virtue of his office, proceeded to open it and sort out the few letters, he went to the bar at Buller’s invitation for a drink.

‘ How are you, boys? How goes it, Rody? I’ll take a rum, please Missis. How’s the claim shapin’, Durham?’

‘ Here’s a delegram for you,’ said Ikey, handing the missive to Durham, and wishing that he could have kept it back till the morning, so as to have made himself acquainted with its contents.

‘ Thank you,’ said Durham. ‘ I wonder who it’s from?’

‘ No bad news, Harry, is there?’ said Mrs. Ikey, sympathetically; ‘ you look very serious.’

‘ Oh, no; it’s from Jimmy Kettle; he and I and Tom Gurner—who went to South Africa—used to be mates on the Etheridge’; and without further

explanation he walked away, accompanied by Rody and Buller.

Early next morning, as Mr. Cohen opened his store and pub, Durham walked in.

'Look here, Cohen, I want to sell out and get away. Will you give me something for my horse, and ten pounds for my share in the crushing? Rody can't do it, of course; neither can Buller.'

'No, I von't,' said Mr. Cohen; 'I ain't going to throw away any more money. Vere do you want to go to?'

Durham, with a gloomy face, handed him the telegram he had received. It ran as follows:

*'From JAMES KETTLE, Adelong.*

*'To HENRY DURHAM, Sugar-bag, N.Q.*

'Tom Gurner returned. Has done well. Wants you and me to go back South Africa with him. Will stand the racket for passage money. Steamer leaves Sydney in four weeks. Hurry up and join us.'

'Can't you give me a lift at all?' said Durham, after Cohen had read the telegram.

'No, I can't.'

'Then blarst you, don't! I'll foot it to Townsville, you infernal old skunk.'

Sure enough that day he did leave, but not on foot, for some one lent him a horse, to be returned by the mailman. Rody accompanied him part of the way and gave him some final instructions.

On the day that Durham reached Townsville Rody and Buller began crushing their stone at the mill. The forty tons of stone were to go through first, and were to be followed by the stuff from Mason's and Crow's old claims, which had been carted down to the mill. As Rody surmised, the stone showed for about ten pennyweights, and

the second day, about dusk, they 'cleaned up', squeezed the amalgam into balls, and placed it in an enamelled dish, ready for retorting.

'Four of these will do us,' said Rody, taking out that number of balls of amalgam, pressing them into a flat shape, and thrusting them into his trousers pockets; 'here's that old swine Ikey coming now to see if we are robbing him.'

'Vell, how does she look?' inquired Cohen.

Rody, with a face of gloom, pointed to the amalgam in the dish. 'It'll go about ten pennyweights,' he said, 'but we're going to start on that other stuff to-morrow. It's patchy, but I believe there's more in it than there was in the quartz.'

'Vell, vat are you going to do with this amalgam? Von't you redord (retort) it now?'

'No,' answered Rody, 'it's not worth while having two retortings. Take it away with you—you have the best right to it—and lock it up. Then, as soon as we have put this mullocky stuff through, we will retort the lot together. It won't take long running that stuff through the battery—it's soft as butter.'

Then, after carefully weighing the amalgam, Rody handed it over to Mr. Cohen for safe keeping, and he and Buller went up to their humpy for the night. But before they bade Mr. Cohen good-night, Rody wrote out a few words on a slip of paper, and handed it to Ikey, with a two-shilling piece.

'Send that along to Big Boulder by any one passing, will you? I told Durham I'd send him a wire. He won't leave Townsville until to-morrow. The steamer goes at four in the afternoon to-morrow.'

When Mr. Cohen got home he read Rody's message, which was brief, but explicit——

'Crushing going badly; not ten weights. Mullock may go as much or more.'

. . . . .

At eight o'clock next morning Rody and Buller were ready to feed their second lot of stone into the boxes. At Rody's suggestion the mill manager, who was also the engine driver (and who employed but two Chinamen to feed and empty the sludge pits in connexion with the wretched old machine), put on very old coarse screens; and whilst he was engaged in doing this, Rody stowed a certain small but heavy canvas bag in a conveniently accessible spot near the battery boxes.

As soon as the screens were fixed, old Joe Fryer came round and started the engine, whilst Rody 'fed' and Buller attended to the tables and blankets.

'We'll feed her, Fryer,' said Rody. 'These Chinkies are right enough with hard stone, but they're no good with mucky stuff like this. They'd have the boxes choked in no time.'

Fryer was quite agreeable, and as soon as he turned away to attend to the furnace Rody seized the canvas bag and poured about a quart of the lead filings into the box. At the same time, Buller came round from the tables with a cupful of quicksilver, and poured that in. This was done at frequent intervals.

In a quarter of an hour Buller came round to Rody and said, in Fryer's hearing, that the amalgam was showing pretty thick on the plates.

Fryer went to look at it, naturally feeling pleased at such good news. In a minute he was back again, and seizing Rody by the hand, his dirty old face beaming with excitement.

'By Jingo! You fellows have struck it this time. I haven't seen anything like it since the time Billy Mason and George Boys put ten loads of stuff like this through and got four hundred ounces. And look here, this stuff of yours is going to be as good.'

'Well, look here, Fryer,' said Rody, modestly, 'I may as well tell you that I somehow thought it was



pretty right. And I believe we've just dropped on such another patch as Mason and Boys did in '72.'

Buller by this time was apparently as much excited as old Fryer, and was now sweeping the amalgam off the plates with a rubber, like a street scraper sweeps up mud—in great stiff ridges—and dropping it into an enamelled bucket. And every time that Fryer was out of sight shoving a log of wood into the furnace, Rody would pour another quart of lead filings in the feed-box, and Buller would follow with a pint of quicksilver.

'Lucky we got him to put on those old worn screens,' muttered Rody to Buller, 'the cursed stuff is beginning to clog the boxes as it is.'

At last, there being no more lead left and but little quicksilver, the stampers worked with more freedom, and in another hour Rody flung down his shovel—the final shovelful of mullock had gone into the box.

'I'll help you clean up as soon as I draw my fire,' said old Fryer. 'By thunder, boys, what'll the chaps say when they see this? What about old Sugar-bag being played out, eh?'

Fortunately for Rody and his partner the mill was a good two miles away from the main camp, there being no nearer water available, and no one had troubled to come down to see how the crushing was going, except one Micky Foran, who had carted their stone down from the claim. But when Micky saw Fryer and Rody go round to the back of the boxes, lift the apron, and take off the screens, he gave a yell that could have been heard a mile:

'Holy Saints, it looks like a grotto filled wid silver!'

And so it did, for the whole of the sides of the box, the stampers, and dies were covered with a coating of amalgam some inches thick and as hard as cement.

In five minutes Micky was galloping up to the camp with the glorious news of Sugar-bag's resurrection, leaving Fryer, Buller, and Rody hard at work digging out the amalgam with cold chisels and butcher knives.

By the time the boxes had been cleaned, and the quicksilver—or rather amalgam—scooped up from the wells, and the whole lot placed in various dishes and buckets, the excited population of Sugar-bag began to appear upon the scene. Among them was Mr. Cohen, who advanced to Rody with a smile.

'Vell, my boy, you've struck id and no misdake. I knew you vas a good——'

'Oh, to blazes out o' this!' said Mr. Minogue, roughly. 'I don't want any of your dashed blarney. Ten days ago you wouldn't give poor Harry Durham a fiver to take him to the bay, and here you come crawling round me, now that our luck has changed. Go to the devil with you! I can pay you your dirty seventy quid now and be hanged to you!'

And with this he pushed his way over to where Fryer and Buller were keeping guard over the white gleaming masses of precious amalgam.

'Going to retort it now, Rody?' said a digger.

'No; we can't. There isn't a retort big enough to hold a quarter of the hard stuff, let alone the quicksilver, which is as lumpy as porridge, as you can see,' and he lifted some in the palm of his hand out of a bucket. 'We'll have to send over to Big Boulder for Jones's two big retorts.'

'Boys,' said a digger, solemnly, 'so help me, I believe there's a thousand ounces of gold going to come out of that there amalgam. What do you think, Rody?'

'About eight hundred,' he answered, modestly; and Ikey Cohen metaphorically smote his breast and wished he had lent Durham all he asked for.

Placing the amalgam in the big box Fryer kept for

the purpose, Rody was about to lock it, when some one made a remark—just the very remark he wanted to hear and be heard by Isaac Cohen, who was still hanging about him.

‘ Sometimes there ’s a lot of silver in these mullocky leaders. I heard that at the Canton Reef, near Ravenswood, there was a terrible lot of it.’

‘ Oh, shut up! What y’r gassin’ about? There ain’t no silver about this field, I bet,’ called out two or three miners in a chorus.

Rody’s face fell. ‘ By jingo, boys, I don’t know. Perhaps Joe is right. I’ve seen Canton Reef gold, it’s only worth about twenty-five bob an ounce owing to the silver in it.’

‘ Try a bit of amalgam on a shovel,’ suggested some one.

Rody lifted the cover of the box and took out a small enamelled cup half full of hard amalgam—the contents of his trousers pockets surreptitiously placed with the rest while cleaning up.

In a few minutes a fire was lit and a shovel with an ounce of amalgam on it was held over the flame. As the shovel grew red hot and the quicksilver passed away in vapour there lay on the heated iron about eight pennyweights of bright yellow, frosted gold.

‘ Right as rain!’ was the unanimous opinion, and then every one went away to get drunk at Cohen’s pub in honour of the occasion.

‘ Vere are you going to, Mr. Minogue?’ said Cohen, oilily, to Rody.

‘ To Big Boulder, to send another wire to Durham and tell him to come back.’

‘ My friend, you will be foolish. Now you and me vill talk pizness. I vant to buy Mr. Durham out. If you vill help me to ged his inderest in the crushing sheap I will call my ackound square and give you—vell, I will give you £200 for yourself.’

Rody appeared to hesitate. At last he said, ' Well, I'll do it. I'll wire him that the stuff is going about two ounces, and that you want to buy him out. I'll tell him to take what you offer. But at the same time I won't see him done too bad. Give him £200 as well.'

' No, I will give him £150.'

' All right. I'll wire to him at once. The steamer goes to-morrow.'

' And I rides in with you to Big Boulder and sends him a delegram, too,' said Ikey joyfully.

In another hour the two messages were in Harry Durham's hand. He read them and smiled.

' Rody's managed it all right.'

At five in the afternoon Mr. Cohen received an answer——

' Will sell you my interest in the Claribel crushing, now going through, for £150 if money is wired to Bank New South Wales before noon to-morrow.'

Mr. Cohen wired it, grinning to himself the while as he thought of the rich mass of amalgam lying in Fryer's box. Nothing much under £350 would be his share, even after paying Rody £200, in addition to Durham's £150.

There was a great attendance to see the retorts opened two days afterwards, and Mr. Cohen went into a series of fits when the opening of the largest cylinder revealed nothing but a black mass of charred nastiness (the result of the lead filings), and the other (which contained the amalgam from the first crushing) showed only a little gold—less than twenty ounces.

Of course he wanted to do something desperate, but Rody took him aside and, showing him certain documents concerning horses, said——

‘ Now, look here ; you had better let things alone. It ’s better for you to lose £350 than go to gaol. This crushing is a great disappointment to me as well as you. We’ve both been had badly over it.’

It was not many weeks before the three mates met again in Sydney, Durham having wired them half of the £150 sent him by Ikey Cohen before he left Townsville, not knowing that they had got £200 out of Ikey themselves. And about a year later Rody sent Mrs. Cohen a letter enclosing the amount of old Fryer’s bill for crushing, and £80 from himself and mates for Ikey. ‘ Tell him, Polly, that he can keep the horses for the £70 against us. The money he sent to Harry Durham—to swindle him out of that rich crushing, and what he gave Buller and me—set us on our legs. We have been doing very well at the Thames here, in New Zealand, since we left Sugar-bag. Of course you can please yourself as to whether you give him the £80 or keep it yourself. And if you send us a receipt signed by yourself, it will do us just as well as his, and please in particular your old friend, RODY MINOGUE.’

# ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

1850-1894

## THE ISLE OF VOICES

KEOLA was married with Lehua, daughter of Kalamake, the wise man of Molokai, and he kept his dwelling with the father of his wife. There was no man more cunning than that prophet; he read the stars, he could divine by the bodies of the dead, and by the means of evil creatures: he could go alone into the highest parts of the mountain, into the region of the hobgoblins, and there he would lay snares to entrap the spirits of the ancient.

For this reason no man was more consulted in all the kingdom of Hawaii. Prudent people bought, and sold, and married, and laid out their lives by his counsels; and the king had him twice to Kona to seek the treasures of Kamehameha. Neither was any man more feared: of his enemies, some had dwindled in sickness by the virtue of his incantations, and some had been spirited away, the life and the clay both, so that folk looked in vain for so much as a bone of their bodies. It was rumoured that he had the art or the gift of the old heroes. Men had seen him at night upon the mountains, stepping from one cliff to the next; they had seen him walking in the high forest, and his head and shoulders were above the trees.

This Kalamake was a strange man to see. He was come of the best blood in Molokai and Maui, of a pure descent; and yet he was more white to look upon than any foreigner: his hair the colour of dry grass, and his eyes red and very blind, so that

‘ Blind as Kalamake, that can see across to-morrow ’ was a byword in the islands.

Of all these doings of his father-in-law, Keola knew a little by the common repute, a little more he suspected, and the rest he ignored. But there was one thing troubled him. Kalamake was a man that spared for nothing, whether to eat or to drink, or to wear; and for all he paid in bright new dollars. ‘ Bright as Kalamake’s dollars ’ was another saying in the Eight Isles. Yet he neither sold, nor planted, nor took hire—only now and then from his sorceries—and there was no source conceivable for so much silver coin.

It chanced one day Keola’s wife was gone upon a visit to Kaunakakai, on the lee side of the island, and the men were forth at the sea-fishing. But Keola was an idle dog, and he lay in the veranda and watched the surf beat on the shore and the birds fly about the cliff. ‘ It was a chief thought with him always—the thought of the bright dollars. When he lay down to bed he would be wondering why they were so many, and when he woke at morn he would be wondering why they were all new; and the thing was never absent from his mind. But this day of all days he made sure in his heart of some discovery. For it seems he had observed the place where Kalamake kept his treasure, which was a lockfast desk against the parlour wall, under the print of Kamehameha the Fifth, and a photograph of Queen Victoria with her crown; and it seems again that, no later than the night before, he found occasion to look in, and behold! the bag lay there empty. And this was the day of the steamer; he could see her smoke off Kalaupapa; and she must soon arrive with a month’s goods, tinned salmon and gin, and all manner of rare luxuries for Kalamake.

‘ Now if he can pay for his goods to-day,’ Keola thought, ‘ I shall know for certain that the man is

a warlock, and the dollars come out of the Devil's pocket.'

While he was so thinking, there was his father-in-law behind him, looking vexed.

'Is that the steamer?' he asked.

'Yes,' said Keola. 'She has but to call at Pele-kunu, and then she will be here.'

'There is no help for it then,' returned Kalamake, 'and I must take you in my confidence, Keola, for the lack of any one better. Come here within the house.'

So they stepped together into the parlour, which was a very fine room, papered and hung with prints, and furnished with a rocking-chair, and a table and a sofa in the European style. There was a shelf of books besides, and a family Bible in the midst of the table, and the lockfast writing-desk against the wall; so that any one could see it was the house of a man of substance.

Kalamake made Keola close the shutters of the windows, while he himself locked all the doors and set open the lid of the desk. From this he brought forth a pair of necklaces hung with charms and shells, a bundle of dried herbs, and the dried leaves of trees, and a green branch of palm.

'What I am about,' said he, 'is a thing beyond wonder. The men of old were wise; they wrought marvels, and this among the rest; but that was at night, in the dark, under the fit stars and in the desert. The same will I do here in my own house and under the plain eye of day.'

So saying he put the Bible under the cushion of the sofa so that it was all covered, brought out from the same place a mat of a wonderfully fine texture, and heaped the herbs and leaves on sand in a tin pan. And then he and Keola put on the necklaces and took their stand upon the opposite corners of the mat.



‘The time comes,’ said the warlock; ‘be not afraid.’

With that he set flame to the herbs, and began to mutter and wave the branch of palm. At first the light was dim because of the closed shutters; but the herbs caught strongly afire, and the flames beat upon Keola, and the room glowed with the burning; and next the smoke rose and made his head swim and his eyes darken, and the sound of Kalamake muttering ran in his ears. And suddenly, to the mat on which they were standing came a snatch or twitch, that seemed to be more swift than lightning. In the same wink the room was gone and the house, the breath all beaten from Keola’s body. Volumes of light rolled upon his eyes and head, and he found himself transported to a beach of the sea, under a strong sun, with a great surf roaring: he and the warlock standing there on the same mat, speechless, gasping and grasping at one another, and passing their hands before their eyes.

‘What was this?’ cried Keola, who came to himself the first because he was the younger. ‘The pang of it was like death.’

‘It matters not,’ panted Kalamake. ‘It is now done.’

‘And, in the name of God, where are we?’ cried Keola.

‘That is not the question,’ replied the sorcerer. ‘Being here, we have matter in our hands, and that we must attend to. Go, while I recover my breath, into the borders of the wood, and bring me the leaves of such and such a herb, and such and such a tree, which you will find to grow there plentifully—three handfuls of each. And be speedy. We must be home again before the steamer comes; it would seem strange if we had disappeared.’ And he sat on the sand and panted.

Keola went up the beach, which was of shining

sand and coral, strewn with singular shells; and he thought in his heart——

‘How do I not know this beach? I will come here again and gather shells.’

In front of him was a line of palms against the sky; not like the palms of the Eight Islands, but tall and fresh and beautiful, and hanging out withered fans like gold among the green, and he thought in his heart——

‘It is strange I should not have found this grove. I will come here again, when it is warm, to sleep.’ And he thought, ‘How warm it has grown suddenly!’ For it was winter in Hawaii, and the day had been chill. And he thought also, ‘Where are the grey mountains? And where is the high cliff with the hanging forest and the wheeling birds?’ And the more he considered, the less he might conceive in what quarter of the islands he was fallen.

In the border of the grove, where it met the beach, the herb was growing, but the tree farther back. Now, as Keola went toward the tree, he was aware of a young woman who had nothing on her body but a belt of leaves.

‘Well!’ thought Keola, ‘they are not very particular about their dress in this part of the country.’ And he paused, supposing she would observe him and escape; and seeing that she still looked before her, stood and hummed aloud. Up she leaped at the sound. Her face was ashen; she looked this way and that, and her mouth gaped with the terror of her soul. But it was a strange thing that her eyes did not rest upon Keola.

‘Good-day,’ said he. ‘You need not be so frightened; I will not eat you.’ And he had scarce opened his mouth before the young woman fled into the bush.

‘These are strange manners,’ thought Keola. And, not thinking what he did, ran after her.

As she ran the girl kept crying in some speech that was not practised in Hawaii, yet some of the words were the same, and he knew she kept calling and warning others. And presently he saw more people running—men, women, and children, one with another, all running and crying like people at a fire. And with that he began to grow afraid himself, and returned to Kalamake bringing the leaves. Him he told what he had seen.

‘You must pay no heed,’ said Kalamake. ‘All this is like a dream and shadows. All will disappear and be forgotten.’

‘It seemed none saw me,’ said Keola.

‘And none did,’ replied the sorcerer. ‘We walk here in the broad sun invisible by reason of these charms. Yet they hear us; and therefore it is well to speak softly, as I do.’

With that he made a circle round the mat with stones, and in the midst he set the leaves.

‘It will be your part,’ said he, ‘to keep the leaves alight, and feed the fire slowly. While they blaze (which is but for a little moment) I must do my errand; and before the ashes blacken the same power that brought us carries us away. Be ready now with the match; and do you call me in good time lest the flames burn out and I be left.’

As soon as the leaves caught the sorcerer leaped like a deer out of the circle, and began to race along the beach like a hound that has been bathing. As he ran he kept stopping to snatch shells; and it seemed to Keola that they glittered as he took them. The leaves blazed with a clear flame that consumed them swiftly; and presently Keola had but a handful left, and the sorcerer was far off, running and stopping.

‘Back!’ cried Keola. ‘Back! The leaves are near done.’

At that Kalamake turned, and if he had run

before, now he flew. But fast as he ran, the leaves burned faster. The flame was ready to expire when, with a great leap, he bounded on the mat. The wind of his leaping blew it out; and with that the beach was gone, and the sun and the sea, and they stood once more in the dimness of the shuttered parlour, and were once more shaken and blinded; and on the mat betwixt them lay a pile of shining dollars. Keola ran to the shutters; and there was the steamer tossing in the swell close by.

The same night Kalamake took his son-in-law apart, and gave him five dollars in his hand.

‘Keola,’ said he, ‘if you are a wise man (which I am doubtful of) you will think you slept this afternoon on the veranda, and dreamed as you were sleeping. I am a man of few words, and I have for my helpers people of short memories.’

Never a word more said Kalamake, nor referred again to that affair. But it ran all the while in Keola’s head—if he were lazy before, he would now do nothing.

‘Why should I work,’ thought he, ‘when I have a father-in-law who makes dollars of sea-shells?’

Presently his share was spent. He spent it all upon fine clothes. And then he was sorry.

‘For,’ thought he, ‘I had done better to have bought a concertina, with which I might have entertained myself all day long.’ And then he began to grow vexed with Kalamake.

‘This man has the soul of a dog,’ thought he. ‘He can gather dollars when he pleases on the beach, and he leaves me to pine for a concertina! Let him beware: I am no child, I am as cunning as he, and hold his secret.’ With that he spoke to his wife Lehua, and complained of her father’s manners.

‘I would let my father be,’ said Lehua. ‘He is a dangerous man to cross.’

'I care that for him!' cried Keola; and snapped his fingers. 'I have him by the nose. I can make him do what I please.' And he told Lehua the story.

But she shook her head.

'You may do what you like,' said she; 'but as sure as you thwart my father, you will be no more heard of. Think of this person, and that person; think of Hua, who was a noble of the House of Representatives, and went to Honolulu every year; and not a bone or a hair of him was found. Remember Kamau, and how he wasted to a thread, so that his wife lifted him with one hand. Keola, you are a baby in my father's hands; he will take you with his thumb and finger and eat you like a shrimp.'

Now Keola was truly afraid of Kalamake, but he was vain too; and these words of his wife's incensed him.

'Very well,' said he, 'if that is what you think of me, I will show how much you are deceived.' And he went straight to where his father-in-law was sitting in the parlour.

'Kalamake,' said he, 'I want a concertina.'

'Do you, indeed?' said Kalamake.

'Yes,' said he, 'and I may as well tell you plainly, I mean to have it. A man who picks up dollars on the beach can certainly afford a concertina.'

'I had no idea you had so much spirit,' replied the sorcerer. 'I thought you were a timid, useless lad, and I cannot describe how pleased I am to find I was mistaken. Now I begin to think I may have found an assistant and successor in my difficult business. A concertina? You shall have the best in Honolulu. And to-night, as soon as it is dark, you and I will go and find the money.'

'Shall we return to the beach?' asked Keola.

'No, no!' replied Kalamake; 'you must begin

to learn more of my secrets. Last time I taught you to pick shells; this time I shall teach you to catch fish. Are you strong enough to launch Pili's boat?'

'I think I am,' returned Keola. 'But why should we not take your own, which is afloat already?'

'I have a reason which you will understand thoroughly before to-morrow,' said Kalamake. 'Pili's boat is the better suited for my purpose. So, if you please, let us meet there as soon as it is dark; and in the meanwhile, let us keep our own counsel, for there is no cause to let the family into our business.'

Honey is not more sweet than was the voice of Kalamake, and Keola could scarce contain his satisfaction.

'I might have had my concertina weeks ago,' thought he, 'and there is nothing needed in this world but a little courage.'

Presently after he espied Lehua weeping, and was half in a mind to tell her all was well.

'But no,' thinks he; 'I shall wait till I can show her the concertina; we shall see what the chit will do then. Perhaps she will understand in the future that her husband is a man of some intelligence.'

As soon as it was dark father and son-in-law launched Pili's boat and set the sail. There was a great sea, and it blew strong from the leeward; but the boat was swift and light and dry, and skimmed the waves. The wizard had a lantern, which he lit and held with his finger through the ring; and the two sat in the stern and smoked cigars, of which Kalamake had always a provision, and spoke like friends of magic and the great sums of money which they could make by its exercise, and what they should buy first, and what second; and Kalamake talked like a father.

Presently he looked all about, and above him at the stars, and back at the island, which was already

three parts sunk under the sea, and he seemed to consider ripely his position.

‘Look!’ says he, ‘there is Molokai already far behind us, and Maui like a cloud; and by the bearing of these three stars I know I am come where I desire. This part of the sea is called the Sea of the Dead. It is in this place extraordinarily deep, and the floor is all covered with the bones of men, and in the holes of this part gods and goblins keep their habitation. The flow of the sea is to the north, stronger than a shark can swim, and any man who shall here be thrown out of a ship it bears away like a wild horse into the uttermost ocean. Presently he is spent and goes down, and his bones are scattered with the rest, and the gods devour his spirit.’

Fear came on Keola at the words, and he looked, and by the light of the stars and the lantern the warlock seemed to change.

‘What ails you?’ cried Keola, quick and sharp.

‘It is not I who am ailing,’ said the wizard; ‘but there is one here very sick.’

With that he changed his grasp upon the lantern, and, behold! as he drew his finger from the ring, the finger stuck and the ring was burst, and his hand was grown to be of the bigness of three.

At that sight Keola screamed and covered his face.

But Kalamake held up the lantern. ‘Look rather at my face!’ said he—and his head was huge as a barrel; and still he grew and grew as a cloud grows on a mountain, and Keola sat before him screaming, and the boat raced on the great seas.

‘And now,’ said the wizard, ‘what do you think about that concertina? and are you sure you would not rather have a flute? No?’ says he; ‘that is well, for I do not like my family to be changeable of purpose. But I begin to think I had better get out of this paltry boat, for my bulk swells to a very unusual

degree, and if we are not the more careful she will presently be swamped.'

With that he threw his legs over the side. Even as he did so, the greatness of the man grew thirty-fold and forty-fold as swift as sight or thinking, so that he stood in the deep seas to the armpits, and his head and shoulders rose like a high isle, and the swell beat and burst upon his bosom, as it beats and breaks against a cliff. The boat ran still to the north, but he reached out his hand, and took the gunwale by the finger and thumb, and broke the side like a biscuit, and Keola was spilled into the sea. And the pieces of the boat the sorcerer crushed in the hollow of his hand and flung miles away into the night.

'Excuse me taking the lantern,' said he; 'for I have a long wade before me, and the land is far, and the bottom of the sea uneven, and I feel the bones under my toes.'

And he turned and went off walking with great strides; and as often as Keola sank in the trough he could see him no longer; but as often as he was heaved upon the crest, there he was striding and dwindling, and he held the lamp high over his head, and the waves broke white about him as he went.

Since first the islands were fished out of the sea there was never a man so terrified as this Keola. He swam indeed, but he swam as puppies swim when they are cast in to drown, and knew not wherefore. He could but think of the hugeness of the swelling of the warlock, of that face which was great as a mountain, of those shoulders that were broad as an isle, and of the seas that beat on them in vain. He thought, too, of the concertina, and shame took hold upon him; and of the dead men's bones, and fear shook him.

Of a sudden he was aware of something dark against the stars that tossed, and a light below, and



a brightness of the cloven sea; and he heard speech of men. He cried out aloud and a voice answered; and in a twinkling the bows of a ship hung above him on a wave like a thing balanced, and swooped down. He caught with his two hands in the chains of her, and the next moment was buried in the rushing seas, and the next hauled on board by seamen.

They gave him gin and biscuit and dry clothes, and asked him how he came where they found him, and whether the light which they had seen was the lighthouse, Lae o Ka Laau. But Keola knew white men are like children and only believe their own stories; so about himself he told them what he pleased, and as for the light (which was Kalamake's lantern) he vowed he had seen none.

The ship was a schooner bound for Honolulu, and then to trade in the low islands; and by a very good chance for Keola she had lost a man off the bowsprit in a squall. It was no use talking. Keola durst not stay in the Eight Islands. Word goes so quickly, and all men are so fond to talk and carry news, that if he hid in the north end of Kauai or in the south end of Kaü, the wizard would have wind of it before a month, and he must perish. So he did what seemed the most prudent, and shipped sailor in the place of the man who had been drowned.

In some ways the ship was a good place. The food was extraordinarily rich and plenty, with biscuits and salt-beef every day, and pea-soup and puddings made of flour and suet twice a week, so that Keola grew fat. The captain also was a good man, and the crew no worse than other whites. The trouble was the mate, who was the most difficult man to please Keola had ever met with, and beat and cursed him daily, both for what he did and what he did not. The blows that he dealt were very sore, for he was strong; and the words he used were very unpalatable, for Keola was come of a good family and

accustomed to respect. And what was the worst of all, whenever Keola found a chance to sleep, there was the mate awake and stirring him up with a rope's end. Keola saw it would never do; and he made up his mind to run away.

They were about a month out from Honolulu when they made the land. It was a fine starry night, the sea was smooth as well as the sky fair; it blew a steady trade; and there was the island on their weather bow, a ribbon of palm-trees lying flat along the sea. The captain and the mate looked at it with the night-glass, and named the name of it, and talked of it, beside the wheel where Keola was steering. It seemed it was an isle where no traders came. By the captain's way, it was an isle besides where no man dwelt; but the mate thought otherwise.

'I don't give a cent for the directory,' said he. 'I've been past here one night in the schooner *Eugenie*; it was just such a night as this; they were fishing with torches, and the beach was thick with lights like a town.'

'Well, well,' says the captain, 'it's steep-to, that's the great point; and there ain't any outlying dangers by the chart, so we'll just hug the lee side of it. Keep her romping full, don't I tell you!' he cried to Keola, who was listening so hard that he forgot to steer.

And the mate cursed him, and swore that Kanaka was for no use in the world, and if he got started after him with a belaying pin, it would be a cold day for Keola.

And so the captain and mate lay down on the house together, and Keola was left to himself.

'This island will do very well for me,' he thought; 'if no traders deal there the mate will never come. And as for Kalamake, it is not possible he can ever get as far as this.'

With that he kept edging the schooner nearer in. He had to do this quietly, for it was the trouble with these white men, and above all with the mate, that you could never be sure of them; they would all be sleeping sound, or else pretending, and if a sail shook, they would jump to their feet and fall on you with a rope's end. So Keola edged her up little by little, and kept all drawing. And presently the land was close on board, and the sound of the sea on the sides of it grew loud.

With that the mate sat up suddenly upon the house.

'What are you doing?' he roars. 'You'll have the ship ashore!'

And he made one bound for Keola, and Keola made another clean over the rail and plump into the starry sea. When he came up again the schooner had payed off on her true course, and the mate stood by the wheel himself, and Keola heard him cursing. The sea was smooth under the lee of the island; it was warm besides, and Keola had his sailor's knife, so he had no fear of sharks. A little way before him the trees stopped; there was a break in the line of the land like the mouth of a harbour, and the tide, which was then flowing, took him up and carried him through. One minute he was without, and the next within: had floated there in a wide shallow water, bright with ten thousand stars, and all about him was the ring of the land, with its string of palm-trees. And he was amazed, because this was a kind of island he had never heard of.

The time of Keola in that place was in two periods—the period when he was alone, and the period when he was there with the tribe. At first he sought everywhere and found no man; only some houses standing in a hamlet, and the marks of fires. But the ashes of the fires were cold and the rains had washed them away; and the winds had blown, and

some of the huts were overthrown. It was here he took his dwelling; and he made a fire drill, and a shell hook, and fished and cooked his fish, and climbed after green coco-nuts, the juice of which he drank, for in all the isle there was no water. The days were long to him, and the nights terrifying. He made a lamp of coco-shell, and drew the oil of the ripe nuts, and made a wick of fibre; and when evening came he closed up his hut, and lit his lamp, and lay and trembled till morning. Many a time he thought in his heart he would have been better in the bottom of the sea, his bones rolling there with the others.

All this while he kept by the inside of the island, for the huts were on the shore of the lagoon, and it was there the palms grew best, and the lagoon itself abounded with good fish. And to the outer side he went once only, and he looked but the once at the beach of the ocean, and came away shaking. For the look of it, with its bright sand, and strewn shells, and strong sun and surf, went sore against his inclination.

‘It cannot be,’ he thought, ‘and yet it is very like. And how do I know? These white men, although they pretend to know where they are sailing, must take their chance like other people. So that after all we may have sailed in a circle, and I may be quite near to Molokai, and this may be the very beach where my father-in-law gathers his dollars.’

So after that he was prudent, and kept to the land side.

It was perhaps a month later, when the people of the place arrived—the fill of six great boats. They were a fine race of men, and spoke a tongue that sounded very different from the tongue of Hawaii, but so many of the words were the same that it was not difficult to understand. The men besides were very courteous, and the women very towardly; and

they made Keola welcome, and built him a house, and gave him a wife; and what surprised him the most he was never sent to work with the young men.

And now Keola had three periods. First he had a period of being very sad, and then he had a period when he was pretty merry. Last of all came the third, when he was the most terrified man in the four oceans.

The cause of the first period was the girl he had to wife. He was in doubt about the island, and he might have been in doubt about the speech, of which he had heard so little when he came there with the wizard on the mat. But about his wife there was no mistake conceivable, for she was the same girl that ran from him crying in the wood. So he had sailed all this way, and might as well have stayed in Molokai; and had left home and wife and all his friends for no other cause but to escape his enemy, and the place he had come to was that wizard's hunting ground, and the shore where he walked invisible. It was at this period when he kept the most close to the lagoon side and, as far as he dared, abode in the cover of his hut.

The cause of the second period was talk he heard from his wife and the chief islanders. Keola himself said little. He was never so sure of his new friends, for he judged they were too civil to be wholesome, and since he had grown better acquainted with his father-in-law the man had grown more cautious. So he told them nothing of himself, but only his name and descent, and that he came from the Eight Islands, and what fine islands they were; and about the king's palace in Honolulu, and how he was a chief friend of the king and the missionaries. But he put many questions and learned much. The island where he was was called the Isle of Voices; it belonged to the tribe, but they made their home

upon another, three hours' sail to the southward. There they lived and had their permanent houses, and it was a rich island, where were eggs and chickens and pigs, and ships came trading with rum and tobacco. It was there the schooner had gone after Keola deserted; there, too, the mate had died, like the fool of a white man that he was. It seems, when the ship came, it was the beginning of the sickly season in that isle, when the fish of the lagoon are poisonous, and all who eat of them swell up and die. The mate was told of it; he saw the boats preparing, because in that season the people leave that island and sail to the Isle of Voices; but he was a fool of a white man, who would believe no stories but his own, and he caught one of these fish, cooked it and ate it, and swelled up and died, which was good news to Keola. As for the Isle of Voices, it lay solitary the most part of the year; only now and then a boat's crew came for copra, and in the bad season, when the fish at the main isle were poisonous, the tribe dwelt there in a body. It had its name from a marvel, for it seemed the sea side of it was all beset with invisible devils; day and night you heard them talking one with another in strange tongues; day and night little fires blazed up and were extinguished on the beach; and what was the cause of these doings no man might conceive. Keola asked them if it were the same in their own island where they stayed, and they told him no, not there; nor yet in any other of some hundred isles that lay all about them in that sea; but it was a thing peculiar to the Isle of Voices. They told him also that these fires and voices were ever on the sea side and in the seaward fringes of the wood, and a man might dwell by the lagoon two thousand years (if he could live so long) and never be any way troubled; and even on the sea side the devils did no harm if let alone. Only once a chief had

cast a spear at one of the voices, and the same night he fell out of a coco-nut palm and was killed.

Keola thought a good bit with himself. He saw he would be all right when the tribe returned to the main island, and right enough where he was, if he kept by the lagoon, yet he had a mind to make things righter if he could. So he told the high chief he had once been in an isle that was pestered the same way, and the folk had found a means to cure that trouble.

‘There was a tree growing in the bush there,’ says he, ‘and it seems these devils came to get the leaves of it. So the people of the isle cut down the tree wherever it was found, and the devils came no more.’

They asked what kind of tree this was, and he showed them the tree of which Kalamake burned the leaves. They found it hard to believe, yet the idea tickled them. Night after night the old men debated it in their councils, but the high chief (though he was a brave man) was afraid of the matter, and reminded them daily of the chief who cast a spear against the voices and was killed, and the thought of that brought all to a stand again.

Though he could not yet bring about the destruction of the trees, Keola was well enough pleased, and began to look about him and take pleasure in his days; and, among other things, he was the kinder to his wife, so that the girl began to love him greatly. One day he came to the hut, and she lay on the ground lamenting.

‘Why,’ said Keola, ‘what is wrong with you now?’

She declared it was nothing.

The same night she woke him. The lamp burned very low, but he saw by her face she was in sorrow.

‘Keola,’ she said, ‘put your ear to my mouth that I may whisper, for no one must hear us. Two

days before the boats begin to be got ready, go you to the sea side of the isle and lie in a thicket. We shall choose that place beforehand, you and I; and hide food; and every night I shall come near by there singing. So when a night comes and you do not hear me, you shall know we are clean gone out of the island, and you may come forth again in safety.'

The soul of Keola died within him.

'What is this?' he cried. 'I cannot live among devils. I will not be left behind upon this isle. I am dying to leave it.'

'You will never leave it alive, my poor Keola, said the girl; 'for to tell you the truth, my people are eaters of men; but this they keep secret. And the reason they will kill you before we leave is because in our island ships come, and Donat-Kimaran comes and talks for the French, and there is a white trader there in a house with a veranda, and a catechist. Oh, that is a fine place indeed! The trader has barrels filled with flour; and a French warship once came in the lagoon and gave everybody wine and biscuit. Ah, my poor Keola, I wish I could take you there, for great is my love to you, and it is the finest place in the seas except Papeete.'

So now Keola was the most terrified man in the four oceans. He had heard tell of eaters of men in the south islands, and the thing had always been a fear to him; and here it was knocking at his door. He had heard besides, by travellers, of their practices, and how when they are in a mind to eat a man, they cherish and fondle him like a mother with a favourite baby. And he saw this must be his own case; and that was why he had been housed, and fed, and wived, and liberated from all work; and why the old men and the chiefs discoursed with him like a person of weight. So he lay on his bed and railed upon his destiny, and the flesh curdled on his bones.



The next day the people of the tribe were very civil, as their way was. They were elegant speakers, and they made beautiful poetry, and jested at meals, so that a missionary must have died laughing. It was little enough Keola cared for their fine ways; all he saw was the white teeth shining in their mouths, and his gorge rose at the sight; and when they were done eating, he went and lay in the bush like a dead man.

The next day it was the same, and then his wife followed him.

'Keola,' she said, 'if you do not eat, I tell you plainly you will be killed and cooked to-morrow. Some of the old chiefs are murmuring already. They think you are fallen sick and must lose flesh.'

With that Keola got to his feet, and anger burned in him.

'It is little I care one way or the other,' said he. 'I am between the devil and the deep sea. Since die I must, let me die the quickest way; and since I must be eaten at the best of it, let me rather be eaten by hobgoblins than by men. Farewell,' said he, and he left her standing, and walked to the sea side of that island.

It was all bare in the strong sun; there was no sign of man, only the beach was trodden, and all about him as he went, the voices talked and whispered, and the little fires sprang up and burned down. All tongues of the earth were spoken there; the French, the Dutch, the Russian, the Tamil, the Chinese. Whatever land knew sorcery, there were some of its people whispering in Keola's ear. That beach was thick as a cried fair, yet no man seen; and as he walked he saw the shells vanish before him, and no man to pick them up. I think the devil would have been afraid to be alone in such a company; but Keola was past fear and courted death. When the fires sprang up, he charged for them like

a bull. Bodiless voices called to and fro; unseen hands poured sand upon the flames; and they were gone from the beach before he reached them.

‘It is plain Kalamake is not here,’ he thought, ‘or I must have been killed long since.’

With that he sat him down in the margin of the wood, for he was tired, and put his chin upon his hands. The business before his eyes continued: the beach babbled with voices, and the fires sprang up and sank, and the shells vanished and were renewed again even while he looked.

‘It was a by-day when I was here before,’ he thought, ‘for it was nothing to this.’

And his head was dizzy with the thought of these millions and millions of dollars, and all these hundreds and hundreds of persons culling them upon the beach and flying in the air higher and swifter than eagles.

‘And to think how they have fooled me with their talk of mints,’ says he, ‘and that money was made there, when it is clear that all the new coin in all the world is gathered on these sands! But I will know better the next time!’ said he.

And at last, he knew not very well how or when, sleep fell on Keola, and he forgot the island and all his sorrows.

Early the next day, before the sun was yet up, a bustle woke him. He awoke in fear, for he thought the tribe had caught him napping; but it was no such matter. Only, on the beach in front of him, the bodiless voices called and shouted one upon another, and it seemed they all passed and swept beside him up the coast of the island.

‘What is afoot now?’ thinks Keola. And it was plain to him it was something beyond ordinary, for the fires were not lighted nor the shells taken, but the bodiless voices kept posting up the beach, and hailing and dying away; and others following,

and by the sound of them these wizards should be angry.

‘It is not me they are angry at,’ thought Keola, ‘for they pass me close.’

As when hounds go by, or horses in a race, or city folk coursing to a fire, and all men join and follow after, so it was now with Keola; and he knew not what he did, nor why he did it, but there, lo and behold! he was running with the voices.

So he turned one point of the island, and this brought him in view of a second; and there he remembered the wizard trees to have been growing by the score together in a wood. From this point there went up a hubbub of men crying not to be described; and by the sound of them, those that he ran with shaped their course for the same quarter. A little nearer, and there began to mingle with the outcry the crash of many axes. And at this a thought came at last into his mind that the high chief had consented; that the men of the tribe had set-to cutting down these trees; that word had gone about the isle from sorcerer to sorcerer, and these were all now assembling to defend their trees. Desire of strange things swept him on. He posted with the voices, crossed the beach, and came into the borders of the wood, and stood astonished. One tree had fallen, others were part hewed away. There was the tribe clustered. They were back to back, and bodies lay, and blood flowed among their feet. The hue of fear was on all their faces; their voices went up to heaven shrill as a weasel’s cry.

Have you seen a child when he is all alone and has a wooden sword, and fights, leaping and hewing with the empty air? Even so the man-eaters huddled back to back, and heaved up their axes, and laid on, and screamed as they laid on, and behold! no man to contend with them! only here and there Keola saw an axe swinging over against them without hands;

and time and again a man of the tribe would fall before it, clove in twain or burst asunder, and his soul sped howling.

For awhile Keola looked upon this prodigy like one that dreams, and then fear took him by the midst as sharp as death, that he should behold such doings. Even in that same flash the high chief of the clan espied him standing, and pointed and called out his name. Thereat the whole tribe saw him also, and their eyes flashed, and their teeth clashed.

'I am too long here,' thought Keola, and ran farther out of the wood and down the beach, not caring whither.

'Keola!' said a voice close by, upon the empty sand.

'Lehua! is that you?' he cried, and gasped, and looked in vain for her; but by the eyesight he was stark alone.

'I saw you pass before,' the voice answered; 'but you would not hear me. Quick! get the leaves and the herbs, and let us free.'

'You are there with the mat?' he asked.

'Here, at your side,' said she. And he felt her arms about him. 'Quick! the leaves and the herbs, before my father can get back!'

So Keola ran for his life, and fetched the wizard fuel; and Lehua guided him back, and set his feet upon the mat, and made the fire. All the time of its burning, the sound of the battle towered out of the wood; the wizards and the man-eaters hard at fight; the wizards, the viewless ones, roaring out aloud like bulls upon a mountain, and the men of the tribe replying shrill and savage out of the terror of their souls. And all the time of the burning, Keola stood there and listened, and shook, and watched how the unseen hands of Lehua poured the leaves. She poured them fast, and the flames burned high, and scorched Keola's hands; and she speeded

and blew the burning with her breath. The last leaf was eaten, the flame fell, and the shock followed, and there were Keola and Lehua in the room at home.

Now, when Keola could see his wife at last he was mighty pleased, and he was mighty pleased to be home again in Molokai and sit down beside a bowl of poi—for they make no poi on board ships, and there was none in the Isle of Voices—and he was out of the body with pleasure to be clean escaped out of the hands of the eaters of men. But there was another matter not so clear, and Lehua and Keola talked of it all night and were troubled. There was Kalamake left upon the isle. If, by the blessing of God, he could but stick there, all were well; but should he escape and return to Molokai, it would be an ill day for his daughter and her husband. They spoke of his gift of swelling, and whether he could wade that distance in the seas. But Keola knew by this time where that island was—and that is to say, in the Low or Dangerous Archipelago. So they fetched the atlas and looked upon the distance in the map, and by what they could make of it, it seemed a far way for an old gentleman to walk. Still, it would not do to make too sure of a warlock like Kalamake, and they determined at last to take counsel of a white missionary.

So the first one that came by Keola told him everything. And the missionary was very sharp on him for taking the second wife in the low island; but for all the rest, he vowed he could make neither head nor tail of it.

‘However,’ says he, ‘if you think this money of your father’s ill-gotten, my advice to you would be, give some of it to the lepers and some to the missionary fund. And as for this extraordinary rigmarole, you cannot do better than keep it to yourselves.’

But he warned the police at Honolulu that, by all he could make out, Kalamake and Keola had been coining false money, and it would not be amiss to watch them.

Keola and Lehua took his advice, and gave many dollars to the lepers and the fund. And no doubt the advice must have been good, for from that day to this Kalamake has never more been heard of. But whether he was slain in the battle by the trees, or whether he is still kicking his heels upon the Isle of Voices, who shall say?

# FRANK T. BULLEN

1857-1915

## THE WHALE IN THE CAVE<sup>1</sup>

JUST when the delightful days were beginning to pall upon us, a real adventure befell us, which, had we been attending strictly to business, we should not have encountered. For a week previous we had been cruising constantly without ever seeing a spout, except those belonging to whales out at sea, whither we knew it was folly to follow them. We tried all sorts of games to while away the time, which certainly did hang heavy, the most popular of which was for the whole crew of the boat to strip, and, getting overboard, be towed along at the ends of short warps, while I sailed her. It was quite mythological—a sort of rude reproduction of Neptune and his attendant Tritons. At last, one afternoon as we were listlessly lolling (half asleep, except the look-out man) across the thwarts, we suddenly came upon a gorge between two cliffs that we must have passed before several times unnoticed. At a certain angle it opened, disclosing a wide sheet of water, extending a long distance ahead. I put the helm up, and we ran through the passage, finding it about a boat's length in width and several fathoms deep, though overhead the cliffs nearly came together in places. Within, the scene was very beautiful, but not more so than many similar ones we had previously witnessed. Still, as the place was new to us our languor was temporarily dispelled, and we paddled along, taking in every feature of the shores with keen eyes that let nothing escape. After

<sup>1</sup> From *The Cruise of the Cachalot*.

we had gone on in this placid manner for maybe an hour, we suddenly came to a stupendous cliff—that is, for those parts—rising almost sheer from the water for about a thousand feet. Of itself it would not have arrested our attention, but at its base was a semicircular opening, like the mouth of a small tunnel. This looked alluring, so I headed the boat for it, passing through a deep channel between two reefs which led straight to the opening. There was ample room for us to enter, as we had lowered the mast; but just as we were passing through, a heave of the unnoticed swell lifted us unpleasantly near the crown of this natural arch. Beneath us, at a great depth, the bottom could be dimly discerned, the water being of the richest blue conceivable, which the sun, striking down through, resolved into some most marvellous colour-schemes in the path of its rays. A delicious sense of coolness, after the fierce heat outside, saluted us as we entered a vast hall, whose roof rose to a minimum height of forty feet, but in places could not be seen at all. A sort of diffused light, weak, but sufficient to reveal the general contour of the place, existed, let in, I supposed, through some unseen crevices in the roof or walls. At first, of course, to our eyes fresh from the fierce glare outside, the place seemed wrapped in impenetrable gloom, and we dared not stir lest we should run into some hidden danger. Before many minutes, however, the gloom lightened as our pupils enlarged, so that, although the light was faint, we could find our way about with ease. We spoke in low tones, for the echoes were so numerous and resonant that even a whisper gave back from those massy walls in a series of recurring hisses, as if a colony of snakes had been disturbed.

We paddled on into the interior of this vast cave, finding everywhere the walls rising sheer from the silent, dark waters, not a ledge or a crevice where one



might gain foothold. Indeed, in some places there was a considerable overhang from above, as if a great dome whose top was invisible sprang from some level below the water. We pushed ahead until the tiny semicircle of light through which we had entered was only faintly visible; and then, finding there was nothing to be seen except what we were already witnessing, unless we cared to go on into the thick darkness, which extended apparently into the bowels of the mountain, we turned and started to go back. Do what we would, we could not venture to break the solemn hush that surrounded us as if we were shut within the dome of some vast cathedral in the twilight. So we paddled noiselessly along for the exit, till suddenly an awful, inexplicable roar set all our hearts thumping fit to break our bosoms. Really, the sensation was most painful, especially as we had not the faintest idea whence the noise came or what had produced it. Again it filled that immense cave with its thunderous reverberations; but this time all the sting was taken out of it, as we caught sight of its author. A goodly bull-humpback had found his way in after us, and the sound of his spout, exaggerated a thousand times in the confinement of that mighty cavern, had frightened us all so that we nearly lost our breath. So far, so good; but, unlike the old nigger, though we were 'doin' blame well', we did not 'let blame well alone'. The next spout that intruder gave, he was right alongside of us. This was too much for the semi-savage instincts of my gallant harpooner, and before I had time to shout a caution he had plunged his weapon deep into old Blowhard's broad back.

I should like to describe what followed, but, in the first place, I hardly know; and, in the next, even had I been cool and collected, my recollections would sound like the ravings of a fevered dream. For of all the hideous uproars conceivable, that was, I

should think, about the worst. The big mammal seemed to have gone frantic with the pain of his wound, the surprise of the attack, and the hampering confinement in which he found himself. His tremendous struggles caused such a commotion that our position could only be compared to that of men shooting Niagara in a cylinder at night. How we kept afloat I do not know. Some one had the gumption to cut the line, so that by the radiation of the disturbance we presently found ourselves close to the wall, and trying to hold the boat in to it with our finger-tips. Would he never be quiet? we thought, as the thrashing, banging, and splashing still went on with unfailing vigour. At last, in, I suppose, one supreme effort to escape, he leaped clear of the water like a salmon. There was a perceptible hush, during which we shrank together like unfledged chickens on a frosty night; then, in a never-to-be-forgotten crash that ought to have brought down the massy roof, that mountainous carcass fell. The consequent violent upheaval of the water should have smashed the boat against the rocky walls, but that final catastrophe was mercifully spared us. I suppose the rebound was sufficient to keep us a safe distance off.

A perfect silence succeeded, during which we sat speechless, awaiting a resumption of the clamour. At last Abner broke the heavy silence by saying, 'I doan' see the do'way any mo' at all, sir.' He was right. The tide had risen, and that half-moon of light had disappeared, so that we were now prisoners for many hours, it not being at all probable that we should be able to find our way out during the night ebb. Well, we were not exactly children, to be afraid of the dark, although there is considerable difference between the velvety darkness of a dungeon and the clear, fresh night of the open air. Still, as long as that beggar of a whale would only keep quiet

or leave the premises, we should be fairly comfortable. We waited and waited until an hour had passed, and then came to the conclusion that our friend was either dead or gone out, as he gave no sign of his presence.

That being settled we anchored the boat, and lit pipes, preparatory to passing as comfortable a night as might be under the circumstances, the only thing troubling me being the anxiety of the skipper on our behalf. Presently the blackness beneath was lit up by a wide band of phosphoric light, shed in the wake of no ordinary-sized fish, probably an immense shark. Another and another followed in rapid succession, until the depths beneath were all ablaze with brilliant foot-wide ribands of green glare, dazzling to the eye and bewildering to the brain. Occasionally a gentle splash or ripple alongside, or a smart tap on the bottom of the boat, warned us how thick the concourse was that had gathered below. Until that weariness which no terror is proof against set in, sleep was impossible, nor could we keep our anxious gaze from that glowing inferno beneath, where one would have thought all the population of Tartarus were holding high revel. Mercifully, at last we sank into a fitful slumber, though fully aware of the great danger of our position. One upward rush of any of those ravening monsters, happening to strike the frail shell of our boat, and a few fleeting seconds would have sufficed for our obliteration as if we had never been.

But the terrible night passed away, and once more we saw the tender, iridescent light stream into that abode of dread. As the day strengthened, we were able to see what was going on below, and a grim vision it presented. The water was literally alive with sharks of enormous size, tearing with never-ceasing energy at the huge carcass of the whale lying on the bottom, who had met his fate in a

singular but not unheard-of way. At that last titantic effort of his he had rushed downward with such terrific force that, striking his head on the bottom, he had broken his neck. I felt very grieved that we had lost the chance of securing him; but it was perfectly certain that before we could get help to raise him, all that would be left on his skeleton would be quite valueless to us. So with such patience as we could command we waited near the entrance until the receding ebb made it possible for us to emerge once more into the blessed light of day. I was horrified at the haggard, careworn appearance of my crew, who had all, excepting the two Kanakas, aged perceptibly during that night of torment. But we lost no time in getting back to the ship, where I fully expected a severe wiggling for the scrape my luckless curiosity had led me into. The captain, however, was very kind, expressing his pleasure at seeing us all safe back again, although he warned me solemnly against similar investigations in future. A hearty meal and a good rest did wonders in removing the severe effects of our adventure, so that by next morning we were all fit and ready for the day's work again.

# JOSEPH CONRAD

1857-1924

## THE SECRET SHARER

### I

ON my right hand there were lines of fishing-stakes resembling a mysterious system of half-submerged bamboo fences, incomprehensible in its division of the domain of tropical fishes, and crazy of aspect as if abandoned forever by some nomad tribe of fishermen now gone to the other end of the ocean; for there was no sign of human habitation as far as the eye could reach. To the left a group of barren islets, suggesting ruins of stone walls, towers, and blockhouses, had its foundations set in a blue sea that itself looked solid, so still and stable did it lie below my feet; even the track of light from the westering sun shone smoothly, without that animated glitter which tells of an imperceptible ripple. And when I turned my head to take a parting glance at the tug which had just left us anchored outside the bar, I saw the straight line of the flat shore joined to the stable sea, edge to edge, with a perfect and unmarked closeness, in one levelled floor half brown, half blue under the enormous dome of the sky. Corresponding in their insignificance to the islets of the sea, two small clumps of trees, one on each side of the only fault in the impeccable joint, marked the mouth of the river Meinam we had just left on the first preparatory stage of our homeward journey; and, far back on the inland level, a larger and loftier mass, the grove surrounding the great Paknam pagoda, was the only

thing on which the eye could rest from the vain task of exploring the monotonous sweep of the horizon. Here and there gleams as of a few scattered pieces of silver marked the windings of the great river; and on the nearest of them, just within the bar, the tug steaming right into the land became lost to my sight, hull and funnel and masts, as though the impassive earth had swallowed her up without an effort, without a tremor. My eye followed the light cloud of her smoke, now here, now there, above the plain, according to the devious curves of the stream, but always fainter and farther away, till I lost it at last behind the mitre-shaped hill of the great pagoda. And then I was left alone with my ship, anchored at the head of the Gulf of Siam.

She floated at the starting-point of a long journey, very still in an immense stillness, the shadows of her spars flung far to the eastward by the setting sun. At that moment I was alone on her decks. There was not a sound in her—and around us nothing moved, nothing lived, not a canoe on the water, not a bird in the air, not a cloud in the sky. In this breathless pause at the threshold of a long passage we seemed to be measuring our fitness for a long and arduous enterprise, the appointed task of both our existences to be carried out, far from all human eyes, with only sky and sea for spectators and for judges.

There must have been some glare in the air to interfere with one's sight, because it was only just before the sun left us that my roaming eyes made out beyond the highest ridge of the principal islet of the group something which did away with the solemnity of perfect solitude. The tide of darkness flowed on swiftly; and with tropical suddenness a swarm of stars came out above the shadowy earth, while I lingered yet, my hand resting lightly on my ship's rail as if on the shoulder of a trusted friend.

But, with all that multitude of celestial bodies staring down at one, the comfort of quiet communion with her was gone for good. And there were also disturbing sounds by this time—voices, footsteps forward; the steward flitted along the main-deck, a busily ministering spirit; a hand-bell tinkled urgently under the poop-deck. . . .

I found my two officers waiting for me near the supper table, in the lighted cuddy. We sat down at once, and as I helped the chief mate, I said:

‘Are you aware that there is a ship anchored inside the islands? I saw her mastheads above the ridge as the sun went down.’

He raised sharply his simple face, overcharged by a terrible growth of whisker, and emitted his usual ejaculations: ‘Bless my soul, sir! You don’t say so!’

My second mate was a round-cheeked, silent young man, grave beyond his years, I thought; but as our eyes happened to meet I detected a slight quiver on his lips. I looked down at once. It was not my part to encourage sneering on board my ship. It must be said, too, that I knew very little of my officers. In consequence of certain events of no particular significance, except to myself, I had been appointed to the command only a fortnight before. Neither did I know much of the hands forward. All these people had been together for eighteen months or so, and my position was that of the only stranger on board. I mention this because it has some bearing on what is to follow. But what I felt most was my being a stranger to the ship; and if all the truth must be told, I was somewhat of a stranger to myself. The youngest man on board (barring the second mate), and untried as yet by a position of the fullest responsibility, I was willing to take the adequacy of the others for granted. They had simply to be equal to their tasks; but I wondered how far I should turn out faithful to that ideal conception of

one's own personality every man sets up for himself secretly.

Meantime the chief mate, with an almost visible effect of collaboration on the part of his round eyes and frightful whiskers, was trying to evolve a theory of the anchored ship. His dominant trait was to take all things into earnest consideration. He was of a painstaking turn of mind. As he used to say, he 'liked to account to himself' for practically everything that came in his way, down to a miserable scorpion he had found in his cabin a week before. The why and the wherefore of that scorpion—how it got on board and came to select his room rather than the pantry (which was a dark place and more what a scorpion would be partial to), and how on earth it managed to drown itself in the inkwell of his writing-desk—had exercised him infinitely. The ship within the islands was much more easily accounted for; and just as we were about to rise from table he made his pronouncement. She was, he doubted not, a ship from home lately arrived. Probably she drew too much water to cross the bar except at the top of spring tides. Therefore she went into that natural harbour to wait for a few days in preference to remaining in an open roadstead.

'That's so,' confirmed the second mate, suddenly, in his slightly hoarse voice. 'She draws over twenty feet. She's the Liverpool ship *Sephora* with a cargo of coal. Hundred and twenty-three days from Cardiff.'

We looked at him in surprise.

'The tugboat skipper told me when he came on board for your letters, sir,' explained the young man. 'He expects to take her up the river the day after to-morrow.'

After thus overwhelming us with the extent of his information he slipped out of the cabin. The mate



observed regretfully that he 'could not account for that young fellow's whims.' What prevented him telling us all about it at once, he wanted to know.

I detained him as he was making a move. For the last two days the crew had had plenty of hard work, and the night before they had very little sleep. I felt painfully that I—a stranger—was doing something unusual when I directed him to let all hands turn in without setting an anchor-watch. I proposed to keep on deck myself till one o'clock or thereabouts. I would get the second mate to relieve me at that hour.

'He will turn out the cook and the steward at four,' I concluded, 'and then give you a call. Of course at the slightest sign of any sort of wind we'll have the hands up and make a start at once.'

He concealed his astonishment. 'Very well, sir.' Outside the cuddy he put his head in the second mate's door to inform him of my unheard-of caprice to take a five hours' anchor-watch on myself. I heard the other raise his voice incredulously—'What? The captain himself?' Then a few more murmurs, a door closed, then another. A few moments later I went on deck.

My strangeness, which had made me sleepless, had prompted that unconventional arrangement, as if I had expected in those solitary hours of the night to get on terms with the ship of which I knew nothing, manned by men of whom I knew very little more. Fast alongside a wharf, littered like any ship in port with a tangle of unrelated things, invaded by unrelated shore people, I had hardly seen her yet properly. Now, as she lay cleared for sea, the stretch of her main-deck seemed to me very fine under the stars. Very fine, very roomy for her size, and very inviting. I descended the poop and paced the waist, my mind picturing to myself the coming passage through the Malay Archipelago,

down the Indian Ocean, and up the Atlantic. All its phases were familiar enough to me, every characteristic, all the alternatives which were likely to face me on the high seas—everything! . . . except the novel responsibility of command. But I took heart from the reasonable thought that the ship was like other ships, the men like other men, and that the sea was not likely to keep any special surprises expressly for my discomfiture.

Arrived at that comforting conclusion, I be-thought myself of a cigar and went below to get it. All was still down there. Everybody at the after end of the ship was sleeping profoundly. I came out again on the quarter-deck, agreeably at ease in my sleeping-suit on that warm breathless night, barefooted, a glowing cigar in my teeth, and, going forward, I was met by the profound silence of the fore end of the ship. Only as I passed the door of the fore-castle I heard a deep, quiet, trustful sigh of some sleeper inside. And suddenly I rejoiced in the great security of the sea as compared with the unrest of the land, in my choice of that untempted life presenting no disquieting problems, invested with an elementary moral beauty by the absolute straightforwardness of its appeal and by the singleness of its purpose.

The riding-light in the fore-rigging burned with a clear, untroubled, as if symbolic, flame, confident and bright in the mysterious shades of the night. Passing on my way aft along the other side of the ship, I observed that the rope side-ladder, put over, no doubt, for the master of the tug when he came to fetch away our letters, had not been hauled in as it should have been. I became annoyed at this, for exactitude in small matters is the very soul of discipline. Then I reflected that I had myself peremptorily dismissed my officers from duty, and by my own act had prevented the anchor-watch

being formally set and things properly attended to. I asked myself whether it was wise ever to interfere with the established routine of duties even from the kindest of motives. My action might have made me appear eccentric. Goodness only knew how that absurdly whiskered mate would 'account' for my conduct, and what the whole ship thought of that informality of their new captain. I was vexed with myself.

Not from compunction certainly, but, as it were mechanically, I proceeded to get the ladder in myself. Now a side-ladder of that sort is a light affair and comes in easily, yet my vigorous tug, which should have brought it flying on board, merely recoiled upon my body in a totally unexpected jerk. What the devil! . . . I was so astounded by the immovableness of that ladder that I remained stock-still, trying to account for it to myself like that imbecile mate of mine. In the end, of course, I put my head over the rail.

The side of the ship made an opaque belt of shadow on the darkling glassy shimmer of the sea. But I saw at once something elongated and pale floating very close to the ladder. Before I could form a guess a faint flash of phosphorescent light, which seemed to issue suddenly from the naked body of a man, flickered in the sleeping water with the elusive, silent play of summer lightning in a night sky. With a gasp I saw revealed to my stare a pair of feet, the long legs, a broad livid back immersed right up to the neck in a greenish cadaverous glow. One hand, awash, clutched the bottom rung of the ladder. He was complete but for the head. A headless corpse! The cigar dropped out of my gaping mouth with a tiny plop and a short hiss quite audible in the absolute stillness of all things under heaven. At that I suppose he raised up his face, a dimly pale oval in the shadow of the ship's

side. But even then I could only barely make out down there the shape of his black-haired head. However, it was enough for the horrid, frost-bound sensation which had gripped me about the chest to pass off. The moment of vain exclamations was past, too. I only climbed on the spare spar and leaned over the rail as far as I could, to bring my eyes nearer to that mystery floating alongside.

As he hung by the ladder, like a resting swimmer, the sea-lightning played about his limbs at every stir; and he appeared in it ghastly, silvery, fish-like. He remained as mute as a fish, too. He made no motion to get out of the water, either. It was inconceivable that he should not attempt to come on board, and strangely troubling to suspect that perhaps he did not want to. And my first words were prompted by just that troubled incertitude.

'What's the matter?' I asked in my ordinary tone, speaking down to the face upturned exactly under mine.

'Cramp,' it answered, no louder. Then slightly anxious, 'I say, no need to call any one.'

'I was not going to,' I said.

'Are you alone on deck?'

'Yes.'

I had somehow the impression that he was on the point of letting go the ladder to swim away beyond my ken—mysterious as he came. But, for the moment, this being appearing as if he had risen from the bottom of the sea (it was certainly the nearest land to the ship) wanted only to know the time. I told him. And he, down there, tentatively:

'I suppose your captain's turned in?'

'I am sure he isn't,' I said.

He seemed to struggle with himself, for I heard something like the low, bitter murmur of doubt. 'What's the good?' His next words came out with a hesitating effort.

'Look here, my man. Could you call him out quietly?'

I thought the time had come to declare myself.

'I am the captain.'

I heard a 'By Jove!' whispered at the level of the water. The phosphorescence flashed in the swirl of the water all about his limbs, his other hand seized the ladder.

'My name's Leggatt.'

The voice was calm and resolute. A good voice. The self-possession of that man had somehow induced a corresponding state in myself. It was very quietly that I remarked:

'You must be a good swimmer.'

'Yes. I've been in the water practically since nine o'clock. The question for me now is whether I am to let go this ladder and go on swimming till I sink from exhaustion, or—to come on board here.'

I felt this was no mere formula of desperate speech, but a real alternative in the view of a strong soul. I should have gathered from this that he was young; indeed, it is only the young who are ever confronted by such clear issues. But at the time it was pure intuition on my part. A mysterious communication was established already between us two—in the face of that silent, darkened tropical sea. I was young, too; young enough to make no comment. The man in the water began suddenly to climb up the ladder, and I hastened away from the rail to fetch some clothes.

Before entering the cabin I stood still, listening in the lobby at the foot of the stairs. A faint snore came through the closed door of the chief mate's room. The second mate's door was on the hook, but the darkness in there was absolutely soundless. He, too, was young and could sleep like a stone. Remained the steward, but he was not likely to wake up before he was called. I got a sleeping-suit

out of my room and, coming back on deck, saw the naked man from the sea sitting on the main-hatch, glimmering white in the darkness, his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. In a moment he had concealed his damp body in a sleeping-suit of the same grey-stripe pattern as the one I was wearing and followed me like my double on the poop. Together we moved right aft, barefooted, silent.

‘What is it?’ I asked in a deadened voice, taking the lighted lamp out of the binnacle, and raising it to his face.

‘An ugly business.’

He had rather regular features; a good mouth; light eyes under somewhat heavy, dark eyebrows; a smooth, square forehead; no growth on his cheeks; a small, brown moustache, and a well-shaped, round chin. His expression was concentrated, meditative, under the inspecting light of the lamp I held up to his face; such as a man thinking hard in solitude might wear. My sleeping-suit was just right for his size. A well-knit young fellow of twenty-five at most. He caught his lower lip with the edge of white, even teeth.

‘Yes,’ I said, replacing the lamp in the binnacle. The warm, heavy tropical night closed upon his head again.

‘There’s a ship over there,’ he murmured.

‘Yes, I know. The *Sephora*. Did you know of us?’

‘Hadn’t the slightest idea. I am the mate of her——’ He paused and corrected himself. ‘I should say I *was*.’

‘Aha! Something wrong?’

‘Yes. Very wrong indeed. I’ve killed a man.’

‘What do you mean? Just now?’

‘No, on the passage. Weeks ago. Thirty-nine south. When I say a man——’

‘Fit of temper,’ I suggested, confidently.

The shadowy, dark head, like mine, seemed to nod imperceptibly above the ghostly grey of my sleeping-suit. It was, in the night, as though I had been faced by my own reflection in the depths of a sombre and immense mirror.

'A pretty thing to have to own up to for a Conway boy,' murmured my double, distinctly.

'You're a Conway boy?'

'I am,' he said, as if startled. Then, slowly . . .  
'Perhaps you too——'

It was so; but being a couple of years older I had left before he joined. After a quick interchange of dates a silence fell; and I thought suddenly of my absurd mate with his terrific whiskers and the 'Bless my soul—you don't say so' type of intellect. My double gave me an inkling of his thoughts by saying:

'My father's a parson in Norfolk. Do you see me before a judge and jury on that charge? For myself I can't see the necessity. There are fellows that an angel from heaven——And I am not that. He was one of those creatures that are just simmering all the time with a silly sort of wickedness. Miserable devils that have no business to live at all. He wouldn't do his duty and wouldn't let anybody else do theirs. But what's the good of talking! You know well enough the sort of ill-conditioned snarling cur——'

He appealed to me as if our experiences had been as identical as our clothes. And I knew well enough the pestiferous danger of such a character where there are no means of legal repression. And I knew well enough also that my double there was no homicidal ruffian. I did not think of asking him for details, and he told me the story roughly in brusque, disconnected sentences. I needed no more. I saw it all going on as though I were myself inside that other sleeping-suit

‘ It happened while we were setting a reefed fore-sail, at dusk. Reefed fore-sail! You understand the sort of weather. The only sail we had left to keep the ship running; so you may guess what it had been like for days. Anxious sort of job, that. He gave me some of his cursed insolence at the sheet. I tell you I was overdone with this terrific weather that seemed to have no end to it. Terrific, I tell you—and a deep ship. I believe the fellow himself was half crazed with funk. It was no time for gentlemanly reproof, so I turned round and felled him like an ox. He up and at me. We closed just as an awful sea made for the ship. All hands saw it coming and took to the rigging, but I had him by the throat, and went on shaking him like a rat, the men above us yelling, “Look out! look out!” Then a crash as if the sky had fallen on my head. They say that for over ten minutes hardly anything was to be seen of the ship—just the three masts and a bit of the fore-castle head and of the poop all awash driving along in a smother of foam. It was a miracle that they found us, jammed together behind the forebits. It’s clear that I meant business, because I was holding him by the throat still when they picked us up. He was black in the face. It was too much for them. It seems they rushed us aft together, gripped as we were, screaming “Murder!” like a lot of lunatics, and broke into the cuddy. And the ship running for her life, touch-and-go all the time, any minute her last in a sea fit to turn your hair grey only a-looking at it. I understand that the skipper, too, started raving like the rest of them. The man had been deprived of sleep for more than a week, and to have this sprung on him at the height of a furious gale nearly drove him out of his mind. I wonder they didn’t fling me overboard after getting the carcass of their precious shipmate out of my fingers. They had rather a



job to separate us, I've been told. A sufficiently fierce story to make an old judge and a respectable jury sit up a bit. The first thing I heard when I came to myself was the maddening howling of that endless gale, and on that the voice of the old man. He was hanging on to my bunk, staring into my face out of his sou'wester.

' " Mr. Leggatt, you have killed a man. You can act no longer as chief mate of this ship." '

His care to subdue his voice made it sound monotonous. He rested a hand on the end of the skylight to steady himself with, and all that time did not stir a limb, so far as I could see. ' Nice little tale for a quiet tea-party,' he concluded in the same tone.

One of my hands, too, rested on the end of the skylight; neither did I stir a limb, so far as I knew. We stood less than a foot from each other. It occurred to me that if old ' Bless my soul—you don't say so ' were to put his head up the companion and catch sight of us, he would think he was seeing double, or imagine himself come upon a scene of weird witchcraft; the strange captain having a quiet confabulation by the wheel with his own grey ghost. I became very much concerned to prevent anything of the sort. I heard the other's soothing undertone.

' My father 's a parson in Norfolk,' it said. Evidently he had forgotten he had told me this important fact before. ' Truly a nice little tale.

' You had better slip down into my state-room now,' I said, moving off stealthily. My double followed my movements; our bare feet made no sound; I let him in, closed the door with care, and, after giving a call to the second mate, returned on deck for my relief.

' Not much sign of any wind yet,' I remarked when he approached.

' No, sir. Not much,' he assented, sleepily, in his

hoarse voice, with just enough deference, no more, and barely suppressing a yawn.

‘Well, that’s all you have to look out for. You have got your orders.’

‘Yes, sir.’

I paced a turn or two on the poop and saw him take up his position face forward with his elbow in the ratlines of the mizzen-rigging before I went below. The mate’s faint snoring was still going on peacefully. The cuddy lamp was burning over the table on which stood a vase with flowers, a polite attention from the ship’s provision merchant—the last flowers we should see for the next three months at the very least. Two bunches of bananas hung from the beam symmetrically, one on each side of the rudder-casing. Everything was as before in the ship—except that two of her captain’s sleeping-suits were simultaneously in use, one motionless in the cuddy, the other keeping very still in the captain’s state-room.

It must be explained here that my cabin had the form of the capital letter L, the door being within the angle and opening into the short part of the letter. A couch was to the left, the bed-place to the right; my writing-desk and the chronometers’ table faced the door. But any one opening it, unless he stepped right inside, had no view of what I call the long (or vertical) part of the letter. It contained some lockers surmounted by a bookcase; and a few clothes, a thick jacket or two, caps, oilskin coat, and such like, hung on hooks. There was at the bottom of that part a door opening into my bath-room, which could be entered also directly from the saloon. But that way was never used.

The mysterious arrival had discovered the advantage of this particular shape. Entering my room, lighted strongly by a big bulkhead lamp swung on gimbals above my writing-desk, I did not see him

anywhere till he stepped out quietly from behind the coats hung in the recessed part.

‘I heard somebody moving about, and went in there at once,’ he whispered.

I, too, spoke under my breath.

‘Nobody is likely to come in here without knocking and getting permission.’

He nodded. His face was thin and the sunburn faded, as though he had been ill. And no wonder. He had been, I heard presently, kept under arrest in his cabin for nearly seven weeks. But there was nothing sickly in his eyes or in his expression. He was not a bit like me, really; yet, as we stood leaning over my bed-place, whispering side by side, with our dark heads together and our backs to the door, anybody bold enough to open it stealthily would have been treated to the uncanny sight of a double captain busy talking in whispers with his other self.

‘But all this doesn’t tell me how you came to hang on to our side-ladder,’ I inquired, in the hardly audible murmurs we used, after he had told me something more of the proceedings on board the *Sephora* once the bad weather was over.

‘When we sighted Java Head I had had time to think all those matters out several times over. I had six weeks of doing nothing else, and with only an hour or so every evening for a tramp on the quarter-deck.’

He whispered, his arms folded on the side of my bed-place, staring through the open port. And I could imagine perfectly the manner of this thinking out—a stubborn if not a steadfast operation; something of which I should have been perfectly incapable.

‘I reckoned it would be dark before we closed with the land,’ he continued, so low that I had to strain my hearing, near as we were to each other, shoulder touching shoulder almost. ‘So I asked

to speak to the old man. He always seemed very sick when he came to see me—as if he could not look me in the face. You know, that fore-sail saved the ship. She was too deep to have run long under bare poles. And it was I that managed to set it for him. Anyway, he came. When I had him in my cabin—he stood by the door looking at me as if I had the halter round my neck already—I asked him right away to leave my cabin door unlocked at night while the ship was going through Sunda Straits. There would be the Java coast within two of three miles, off Angier Point. I wanted nothing more. I've had a prize for swimming my second year in the Conway.'

'I can believe it,' I breathed out.

'God only knows why they locked me in every night. To see some of their faces you'd have thought they were afraid I'd go about at night strangling people. Am I a murdering brute? Do I look it? By Jove! if I had been he wouldn't have trusted himself like that into my room. You'll say I might have chucked him aside and bolted out, there and then—it was dark already. Well, no. And for the same reason I wouldn't think of trying to smash the door. There would have been a rush to stop me at the noise, and I did not mean to get into a confounded scrimmage. Somebody else might have got killed—for I would not have broken out only to get chucked back, and I did not want any more of that work. He refused, looking more sick than ever. He was afraid of the men, and also of that old second mate of his who had been sailing with him for years—a grey-headed old humbug; and his steward, too, had been with him devil knows how long—seventeen years or more—a dogmatic sort of loafer who hated me like poison, just because I was the chief mate. No chief mate ever made more than one voyage in the *Sephora*, you know. Those two old chaps ran the

ship. Devil only knows what the skipper wasn't afraid of (all his nerve went to pieces altogether in that hellish spell of bad weather we had)—of what the law would do to him—of his wife, perhaps. Oh, yes! she's on board. Though I don't think she would have meddled. She would have been only too glad to have me out of the ship in any way. The "brand of Cain" business, don't you see. That's all right. I was ready enough to go off wandering on the face of the earth—and that was price enough to pay for an Abel of that sort. Anyhow, he wouldn't listen to me. "This thing must take its course. I represent the law here." He was shaking like a leaf. "So you won't?" "No!" "Then I hope you will be able to sleep on that," I said, and turned my back on him. "I wonder that *you* can," cries he, and locks the door.

'Well, after that, I couldn't. Not very well. That was three weeks ago. We have had a slow passage through the Java Sea; drifted about Carimata for ten days. When we anchored here they thought, I suppose, it was all right. The nearest land (and that's five miles) is the ship's destination; the consul would soon set about catching me; and there would have been no object in bolting to these islets there. I don't suppose there's a drop of water on them. I don't know how it was, but to-night that steward, after bringing me my supper, went out to let me eat it, and left the door unlocked. And I ate it—all there was, too. After I had finished I strolled out on the quarter-deck. I don't know that I meant to do anything. A breath of fresh air was all I wanted, I believe. Then a sudden temptation came over me. I kicked off my slippers and was in the water before I had made up my mind fairly. Somebody heard the splash and they raised an awful hullabaloo. "He's gone! Lower the boats! He's committed suicide! No, he's swim-

ming." Certainly I was swimming. It's not so easy for a swimmer like me to commit suicide by drowning. I landed on the nearest islet before the boat left the ship's side. I heard them pulling about in the dark, hailing, and so on, but after a bit they gave up. Everything quieted down and the anchorage became as still as death. I sat down on a stone and began to think. I felt certain they would start searching for me at daylight. There was no place to hide on those stony things—and if there had been, what would have been the good? But now I was clear of that ship I was not going back. So after a while I took off all my clothes, tied them up in a bundle with a stone inside, and dropped them in the deep water on the outer side of that islet. That was suicide enough for me. Let them think what they liked, but I didn't mean to drown myself. I meant to swim till I sank—but that's not the same thing. I struck out for another of these little islands, and it was from that one that I first saw your riding-light. Something to swim for. I went on easily, and on the way I came upon a flat rock a foot or two above water. In the daytime, I dare say, you might make it out with a glass from your poop. I scrambled up on it and rested myself for a bit. Then I made another start. That last spell must have been over a mile.'

His whisper was getting fainter and fainter, and all the time he stared straight out through the port-hole, in which there was not even a star to be seen. I had not interrupted him. There was something that made comment impossible in his narrative, or perhaps in himself; a sort of feeling, a quality, which I can't find a name for. And when he ceased, all I found was a futile whisper: 'So you swam for our light?'

'Yes—straight for it. It was something to swim for. I couldn't see any stars low down because the

coast was in the way, and I couldn't see the land, either. The water was like glass. One might have been swimming in a confounded thousand-feet deep cistern with no place for scrambling out anywhere; but what I didn't like was the notion of swimming round and round like a crazed bullock before I gave out; and as I didn't mean to go back . . . No. Do you see me being hauled back, stark naked, off one of these little islands by the scruff of the neck and fighting like a wild beast? Somebody would have got killed for certain, and I did not want any of that. So I went on. 'Then your ladder——'

'Why didn't you hail the ship?' I asked, a little louder.

He touched my shoulder lightly. Lazy footsteps came right over our heads and stopped. The second mate had crossed from the other side of the poop and might have been hanging over the rail, for all we knew.

'He couldn't hear us talking—could he?' My double breathed into my very ear, anxiously.

His anxiety was an answer, a sufficient answer, to the question I had put to him. An answer containing all the difficulty of that situation. I closed the port-hole quietly, to make sure. A louder word might have been overheard.

'Who's that?' he whispered then.

'My second mate. But I don't know much more of the fellow than you do.'

And I told him a little about myself. I had been appointed to take charge while I least expected anything of the sort, not quite a fortnight ago. I didn't know either the ship or the people. Hadn't had the time in port to look about me or size anybody up. And as to the crew, all they knew was that I was appointed to take the ship home. For the rest, I was almost as much of a stranger on board as himself, I said. And at the moment I felt it most acutely

I felt that it would take very little to make me a suspect person in the eyes of the ship's company.

He had turned about meantime; and we, the two strangers in the ship, faced each other in identical attitudes.

'Your ladder——' he murmured, after a silence. 'Who'd have thought of finding a ladder hanging over at night in a ship anchored out here! I felt just then a very unpleasant faintness. After the life I've been leading for nine weeks, anybody would have got out of condition. I wasn't capable of swimming round as far as your rudder-chains. And, lo and behold! there was a ladder to get hold of. After I gripped it I said to myself, "What's the good?" When I saw a man's head looking over I thought I would swim away presently and leave him shouting—in whatever language it was. I didn't mind being looked at. I—I liked it. And then you speaking to me so quietly—as if you had expected me—made me hold on a little longer. It had been a confounded lonely time—I don't mean while swimming. I was glad to talk a little to somebody that didn't belong to the *Sephora*. As to asking for the captain, that was a mere impulse. It could have been no use, with all the ship knowing about me and the other people pretty certain to be round here in the morning. I don't know—I wanted to be seen, to talk with somebody, before I went on. I don't know what I would have said. . . . "Fine night, isn't it?" or something of the sort.'

'Do you think they will be round here presently?' I asked with some incredulity.

'Quite likely,' he said, faintly.

He looked extremely haggard all of a sudden. His head rolled on his shoulders.

'H'm. We shall see then. Meantime get into that bed,' I whispered. 'Want help? There.'

It was a rather high bed-place with a set of



drawers underneath. This amazing swimmer really needed the lift I gave him by seizing his leg. He tumbled in, rolled over on his back, and flung one arm across his eyes. And then, with his face nearly hidden, he must have looked exactly as I used to look in that bed. I gazed upon my other self for a while before drawing across carefully the two green serge curtains which ran on a brass rod. I thought for a moment of pinning them together for greater safety, but I sat down on the couch, and once there I felt unwilling to rise and hunt for a pin. I would do it in a moment. I was extremely tired, in a peculiarly intimate way, by the strain of stealthiness, by the effort of whispering, and the general secrecy of this excitement. It was three o'clock by now and I had been on my feet since nine, but I was not sleepy; I could not have gone to sleep. I sat there, fagged out, looking at the curtains, trying to clear my mind of the confused sensation of being in two places at once, and greatly bothered by an exasperating knocking in my head. It was a relief to discover suddenly that it was not in my head at all, but on the outside of the door. Before I could collect myself the words 'Come in' were out of my mouth, and the steward entered with a tray, bringing in my morning coffee. I had slept, after all, and I was so frightened that I shouted, 'This way! I am here, steward,' as though he had been miles away. He put down the tray on the table next the couch and only then said, very quietly, 'I can see you are here, sir.' I felt him give me a keen look, but I dared not meet his eyes just then. He must have wondered why I had drawn the curtains of my bed before going to sleep on the couch. He went out, hooking the door open as usual.

I heard the crew washing decks above me. I knew I would have been told at once if there had been any wind. Calm, I thought, and I was doubly vexed,

Indeed, I felt dual more than ever. The steward reappeared suddenly in the doorway. I jumped up from the couch so quickly that he gave a start.

‘What do you want here?’

‘Close your port, sir—they are washing decks.’

‘It is closed,’ I said, reddening.

‘Very well, sir.’ But he did not move from the doorway and returned my stare in an extraordinary, equivocal manner for a time. Then his eyes wavered, all his expression changed, and in a voice unusually gentle, almost coaxingly:

‘May I come in to take the empty cup away, sir?’

‘Of course!’ I turned my back on him while he popped in and out. Then I unhooked and closed the door and even pushed the bolt. This sort of thing could not go on very long. The cabin was as hot as an oven, too. I took a peep at my double, and discovered that he had not moved, his arm was still over his eyes; but his chest heaved; his hair was wet; his chin glistened with perspiration. I reached over him and opened the port.

‘I must show myself on deck,’ I reflected.

Of course, theoretically, I could do what I liked, with no one to say nay to me within the whole circle of the horizon; but to lock my cabin door and take the key away I did not dare. Directly I put my head out of the companion I saw the group of my two officers, the second mate barefooted, the chief mate in long india-rubber boots, near the break of the poop, and the steward half-way down the poop-ladder talking to them eagerly. He happened to catch sight of me and dived, the second ran down on the main-deck shouting some order or other, and the chief mate came to meet me, touching his cap.

There was a sort of curiosity in his eye that I did not like. I don’t know whether the steward had told them that I was ‘queer’ only, or downright drunk,

but I know the man meant to have a good look at me. I watched him coming with a smile which, as he got into point-blank range, took effect and froze his very whiskers. I did not give him time to open his lips.

‘Square the yards by lifts and braces before the hands go to breakfast.’

It was the first particular order I had given on board that ship; and I stayed on deck to see it executed, too. I had felt the need of asserting myself without loss of time. That sneering young cub got taken down a peg or two on that occasion, and I also seized the opportunity of having a good look at the face of every foremast man as they filed past me to go to the after braces. At breakfast time, eating nothing myself, I presided with such frigid dignity that the two mates were only too glad to escape from the cabin as soon as decency permitted; and all the time the dual working of my mind distracted me almost to the point of insanity. I was constantly watching myself, my secret self, as dependent on my actions as my own personality, sleeping in that bed, behind that door which faced me as I sat at the head of the table. It was very much like being mad, only it was worse because one was aware of it.

I had to shake him for a solid minute, but when at last he opened his eyes it was in the full possession of his senses, with an inquiring look.

‘All’s well so far,’ I whispered. ‘Now you must vanish into the bath-room.’

He did so, as noiseless as a ghost, and I then rang for the steward, and facing him boldly, directed him to tidy up my state-room while I was having my bath—‘and be quick about it.’ As my tone admitted of no excuses, he said, ‘Yes, sir,’ and ran off to fetch his dust-pan and brushes. I took a bath and did most of my dressing, splashing, and whistling softly for the steward’s edification, while the secret sharer of my life stood drawn up bolt upright in that little

space, his face looking very sunken in daylight, his eyelids lowered under the stern, dark line of his eyebrows drawn together by a slight frown.

When I left him there to go back to my room the steward was finishing dusting. I sent for the mate and engaged him in some insignificant conversation. It was, as it were, trifling with the terrific character of his whiskers; but my object was to give him an opportunity for a good look at my cabin. And then I could at last shut, with a clear conscience, the door of my state-room and get my double back into the recessed part. There was nothing else for it. He had to sit still on a small folding stool, half smothered by the heavy coats hanging there. We listened to the steward going into the bath-room out of the saloon, filling the water-bottles there, scrubbing the bath, setting things to rights, whisk, bang, clatter—out again into the saloon—turn the key—click. Such was my scheme for keeping my second self invisible. Nothing better could be contrived under the circumstances. And there we sat; I at my writing-desk ready to appear busy with some papers, he behind me, out of sight of the door. It would not have been prudent to talk in daytime; and I could not have stood the excitement of that queer sense of whispering to myself. Now and then, glancing over my shoulder, I saw him far back there, sitting rigidly on the low stool, his bare feet close together, his arms folded, his head hanging on his breast—and perfectly still. Anybody would have taken him for me.

I was fascinated by it myself. Every moment I had to glance over my shoulder. I was looking at him when a voice outside the door said:

‘ Beg pardon, sir.’

‘ Well!’ . . . I kept my eyes on him, and so, when the voice outside the door announced, ‘ There’s a ship’s boat coming our way, sir,’ I saw him give a

start—the first movement he had made for hours. But he did not raise his bowed head.

‘All right. Get the ladder over.’

I hesitated. Should I whisper something to him? But what? His immobility seemed to have been never disturbed. What could I tell him he did not know already? . . . Finally I went on deck.

## II

The skipper of the *Sephora* had a thin red whisker all round his face, and the sort of complexion that goes with hair of that colour; also the particular, rather smeary shade of blue in the eyes. He was not exactly a showy figure; his shoulders were high, his stature but middling—one leg slightly more bandy than the other. He shook hands, looking vaguely around. A spiritless tenacity was his main characteristic, I judged. I behaved with a politeness which seemed to disconcert him. Perhaps he was shy. He mumbled to me as if he were ashamed of what he was saying; gave his name (it was something like Archbold—but at this distance of years I hardly am sure), his ship’s name, and a few other particulars of that sort, in the manner of a criminal making a reluctant and doleful confession. He had had terrible weather on the passage out—terrible—terrible—wife aboard, too.

By this time we were seated in the cabin and the steward brought in a tray with a bottle and glasses. ‘Thanks! No.’ Never took liquor. Would have some water, though. He drank two tumblerfuls. Terrible thirsty work. Ever since daylight had been exploring the islands round his ship.

‘What was that for—fun?’ I asked, with an appearance of polite interest.

‘No!’ He sighed. ‘Painful duty.’

As he persisted in his mumbling and I wanted

my double to hear every word, I hit upon the notion of informing him that I regretted to say I was hard of hearing.

‘Such a young man, too!’ he nodded, keeping his smeary blue, unintelligent eyes fastened upon me. What was the cause of it—some disease? he inquired, without the least sympathy and as if he thought that, if so, I’d got no more than I deserved.

‘Yes; disease,’ I admitted in a cheerful tone which seemed to shock him. But my point was gained, because he had to raise his voice to give me his tale. It is not worth while to record that version. It was just over two months since all this had happened, and he had thought so much about it that he seemed completely muddled as to its bearings, but still immensely impressed.

‘What would you think of such a thing happening on board your own ship? I’ve had the *Sephora* for these fifteen years. I am a well-known shipmaster.’

He was densely distressed—and perhaps I should have sympathized with him if I had been able to detach my mental vision from the unsuspected sharer of my cabin as though he were my second self. There he was on the other side of the bulkhead, four or five feet from us, no more, as we sat in the saloon. I looked politely at Captain Archbold (if that was his name), but it was the other I saw, in a grey sleeping-suit, seated on a low stool, his bare feet close together, his arms folded, and every word said between us falling into the ears of his dark head bowed on his chest.

‘I have been at sea now, man and boy, for seven-and-thirty years, and I’ve never heard of such a thing happening in an English ship. And that it should be my ship. Wife on board, too.’

I was hardly listening to him.

‘Don’t you think,’ I said, ‘that the heavy sea which, you told me, came aboard just then might

have killed the man? I have seen the sheer weight of a sea kill a man very neatly, by simply breaking his neck.'

'Good God!' he uttered, impressively, fixing his smeary blue eyes on me. 'The sea! No man killed by the sea ever looked like that.' He seemed positively scandalized at my suggestion. And as I gazed at him, certainly not prepared for anything original on his part, he advanced his head close to mine and thrust his tongue out at me so suddenly that I couldn't help starting back.

After scoring over my calmness in this graphic way he nodded wisely. If I had seen the sight, he assured me, I would never forget it as long as I lived. The weather was too bad to give the corpse a proper sea burial. So next day at dawn they took it up on the poop, covering its face with a bit of bunting; he read a short prayer, and then, just as it was, in its oilskins and long boots, they launched it amongst those mountainous seas that seemed ready every moment to swallow up the ship herself and the terrified lives on board of her.

'That reefed fore-sail saved you,' I threw in.

'Under God—it did,' he exclaimed fervently. 'It was by a special mercy, I firmly believe, that it stood some of those hurricane squalls.'

'It was the setting of that sail which——' I began.

'God's own hand in it,' he interrupted me. 'Nothing less could have done it. I don't mind telling you that I hardly dared give the order. It seemed impossible that we could touch anything without losing it, and then our last hope would have been gone.'

The terror of that gale was on him yet. I let him go on for a bit, then said, casually—as if returning to a minor subject:

'You were very anxious to give up your mate to the shore people, I believe?'

He was. To the law. His obscure tenacity on that point had in it something incomprehensible and a little awful; something, as it were, mystical, quite apart from his anxiety that he should not be suspected of 'countenancing any doings of that sort'. Seven-and-thirty virtuous years at sea, of which over twenty of immaculate command, and the last fifteen in the *Sephora*, seemed to have laid him under some pitiless obligation.

'And you know,' he went on, groping shamefacedly amongst his feelings, 'I did not engage that young fellow. His people had some interest with my owners. I was in a way forced to take him on. He looked very smart, very gentlemanly, and all that. But do you know—I never liked him, somehow. I am a plain man. You see, he wasn't exactly the sort for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*.'

I had become so connected in thoughts and impressions with the secret sharer of my cabin that I felt as if I, personally, were being given to understand that I, too, was not the sort that would have done for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*. I had no doubt of it in my mind.

'Not at all the style of man. You understand,' he insisted, superfluously, looking hard at me.

I smiled urbanely. He seemed at a loss for a while.

'I suppose I must report a suicide.'

'Beg pardon?'

'Sui-cide! That's what I'll have to write to my owners directly I get in.'

'Unless you manage to recover him before to-morrow,' I assented, dispassionately. . . . 'I mean, alive.'

He mumbled something which I really did not catch, and I turned my ear to him in a puzzled manner. He fairly bawled:

'The land—I say, the mainland is at least seven miles off my anchorage.'



‘About that.’

My lack of excitement, of curiosity, of surprise, of any sort of pronounced interest, began to arouse his distrust. But except for the felicitous pretence of deafness I had not tried to pretend anything: I had felt utterly incapable of playing the part of ignorance properly, and therefore was afraid to try. It is also certain that he had brought some ready-made suspicions with him, and that he viewed my politeness as a strange and unnatural phenomenon. And yet how else could I have received him? Not heartily! That was impossible for psychological reasons, which I need not state here. My only object was to keep off his inquiries. Surlily? Yes, but surliness might have provoked a point-blank question. From its novelty to him and from its nature, punctilious courtesy was the manner best calculated to restrain the man. But there was the danger of his breaking through my defence bluntly. I could not, I think, have met him by a direct lie, also for psychological (not moral) reasons. If he had only known how afraid I was of his putting my feeling of identity with the other to the test! But, strangely enough—(I thought of it only afterwards)—I believe that he was not a little disconcerted by the reverse side of that weird situation, by something in me that reminded him of the man he was seeking—suggested a mysterious similitude to the young fellow he had distrusted and disliked from the first.

However that might have been, the silence was not very prolonged. He took another oblique step.

‘I reckon I had no more than a two-mile pull to your ship. Not a bit more.’

‘And quite enough, too, in this awful heat,’ I said.

Another pause full of mistrust followed. Necessity, they say, is mother of invention, but fear, too,

is not barren of ingenious suggestions. And I was afraid he would ask me point-blank for news of my other self.

‘Nice little saloon, isn’t it?’ I remarked, as if noticing for the first time the way his eyes roamed from one closed door to the other. ‘And very well fitted out, too. Here, for instance,’ I continued, reaching over the back of my seat negligently and flinging the door open, ‘is my bath-room.’

He made an eager movement, but hardly gave it a glance. I got up, shut the door of the bath-room, and invited him to have a look round, as if I were very proud of my accommodation. He had to rise and be shown round, but he went through the business without any raptures whatever.

‘And now we’ll have a look at my state-room,’ I declared, in a voice as loud as I dared to make it, crossing the cabin to the starboard side with purposely heavy steps.

He followed me in and gazed around. ‘My intelligent double had vanished. I played my part.

‘Very convenient—isn’t it?’

‘Very nice. Very comf . . .’ He didn’t finish, and went out brusquely as if to escape from some unrighteous wiles of mine. But it was not to be. I had been too frightened not to feel vengeful; I felt I had him on the run, and I meant to keep him on the run. My polite insistence must have had something menacing in it, because he gave in suddenly. And I did not let him off a single item; mate’s room, pantry, store-rooms, the very sail-locker which was also under the poop—he had to look into them all. When at last I showed him out on the quarter-deck he drew a long, spiritless sigh, and mumbled dismally that he must really be going back to his ship now. I desired my mate, who had joined us, to see to the captain’s boat.

The man of whiskers gave a blast on the whistle

which he used to wear hanging round his neck, and yelled, '*Sephoras* away!' My double down there in my cabin must have heard, and certainly could not feel more relieved than I. Four fellows came running out from somewhere forward and went over the side, while my own men, appearing on deck too, lined the rail. I escorted my visitor to the gangway ceremoniously, and nearly overdid it. He was a tenacious beast. On the very ladder he lingered, and in that unique, guiltily conscientious manner of sticking to the point:

'I say . . . you . . . you don't think that——'

I covered his voice loudly:

'Certainly not. . . . I am delighted. Good-bye.'

I had an idea of what he meant to say, and just saved myself by the privilege of defective hearing. He was too shaken generally to insist, but my mate, close witness of that parting, looked mystified, and his face took on a thoughtful cast. As I did not want to appear as if I wished to avoid all communication with my officers, he had the opportunity to address me.

'Seems a very nice man. His boat's crew told our chaps a very extraordinary story, if what I am told by the steward is true. I suppose you had it from the captain, sir?'

'Yes. I had a story from the captain.'

'A very horrible affair—isn't it, sir?'

'It is.'

'Beats all these tales we hear about murders in Yankee ships.'

'I don't think it beats them. I don't think it resembles them in the least.'

'Bless my soul—you don't say so! But of course I've no acquaintance whatever with American ships, not I, so I couldn't go against your knowledge. It's horrible enough for me. . . . But the queerest part is that those fellows seemed to have some idea the man

was hidden aboard here. They had really. Did you ever hear of such a thing?'

'Preposterous—isn't it?'

We were walking to and fro athwart the quarter-deck. No one of the crew forward could be seen (the day was Sunday), and the mate pursued:

'There was some little dispute about it. Our chaps took offence. "As if we would harbour a thing like that," they said. "Wouldn't you like to look for him in our coal-hole?" Quite a tiff. But they made it up in the end. I suppose he did drown himself. Don't you, sir?'

'I don't suppose anything.'

'You have no doubt in the matter, sir?'

'None whatever.'

I left him suddenly. I felt I was producing a bad impression, but with my double down there it was most trying to be on deck. And it was almost as trying to be below. Altogether a nerve-trying situation. But on the whole I felt less torn in two when I was with him. There was no one in the whole ship whom I dared take into my confidence. Since the hands had got to know his story, it would have been impossible to pass him off for any one else, and an accidental discovery was to be dreaded now more than ever. . . .

The steward being engaged in laying the table for dinner, we could talk only with our eyes when I first went down. Later in the afternoon we had a cautious try at whispering. The Sunday quietness of the ship was against us; the stillness of air and water around her was against us; the elements, the men were against us—everything was against us in our secret partnership; time itself—for this could not go on forever. The very trust in Providence was, I suppose, denied to his guilt. Shall I confess that this thought cast me down very much? And as to the chapter of accidents which counts for so much

in the book of success, I could only hope that it was closed. For what favourable accident could be expected?

‘Did you hear everything?’ were my first words as soon as we took up our position side by side, leaning over my bed-place.

He had. And the proof of it was his earnest whisper, ‘The man told you he hardly dared to give the order.’

I understood the reference to be to that saving fore-sail.

‘Yes. He was afraid of it being lost in the setting.’

‘I assure you he never gave the order. He may think he did, but he never gave it. He stood there with me on the break of the poop after the main-top-sail blew away, and whimpered about our last hope—positively whimpered about it and nothing else—and the night coming on! To hear one’s skipper go on like that in such weather was enough to drive any fellow out of his mind. It worked me up into a sort of desperation. I just took it into my own hands and went away from him, boiling, and—— But what’s the use telling you? *You know!*... Do you think that if I had not been pretty fierce with them I should have got the men to do anything? Not it! The bos’n perhaps? Perhaps! It wasn’t a heavy sea—it was a sea gone mad! I suppose the end of the world will be something like that; and a man may have the heart to see it coming once and be done with it—but to have to face it day after day—— I don’t blame anybody. I was precious little better than the rest. Only—I was an officer of that old coal-wagon, anyhow——’

‘I quite understand,’ I conveyed that sincere assurance into his ear. He was out of breath with whispering; I could hear him pant slightly. It was all very simple. The same strung-up force which had given twenty-four men a chance, at least, for

their lives, had, in a sort of recoil, crushed an unworthy mutinous existence.

But I had no leisure to weigh the merits of the matter—footsteps in the saloon, a heavy knock. ‘There’s enough wind to get under way with, sir.’ Here was the call of a new claim upon my thoughts and even upon my feelings.

‘Turn the hands up,’ I cried through the door. ‘I’ll be on deck directly.’

I was going out to make the acquaintance of my ship. Before I left the cabin our eyes met—the eyes of the only two strangers on board. I pointed to the recessed part where the little camp-stool awaited him and laid my finger on my lips. He made a gesture—somewhat vague—a little mysterious, accompanied by a faint smile, as if of regret.

This is not the place to enlarge upon the sensations of a man who feels for the first time a ship move under his feet to his own independent word. In my case they were not unalloyed. I was not wholly alone with my command; for there was that stranger in my cabin. Or rather, I was not completely and wholly with her. Part of me was absent. That mental feeling of being in two places at once affected me physically as if the mood of secrecy had penetrated my very soul. Before an hour had elapsed since the ship had begun to move, having occasion to ask the mate (he stood by my side) to take a compass bearing of the pagoda, I caught myself reaching up to his ear in whispers. I say I caught myself, but enough had escaped to startle the man. I can’t describe it otherwise than by saying that he shied. A grave, preoccupied manner, as though he were in possession of some perplexing intelligence, did not leave him henceforth. A little later I moved away from the rail to look at the compass with such a stealthy gait that the helmsman noticed it—and I could not help noticing the unusual roundness of his

eyes. These are trifling instances, though it's to no commander's advantage to be suspected of ludicrous eccentricities. But I was also more seriously affected. There are to a seaman certain words, gestures, that should in given conditions come as naturally, as instinctively as the winking of a menaced eye. A certain order should spring on to his lips without thinking; a certain sign should get itself made, so to speak, without reflection. But all unconscious alertness had abandoned me. I had to make an effort of will to recall myself back (from the cabin) to the conditions of the moment. I felt that I was appearing an irresolute commander to those people who were watching me more or less critically.

And, besides, there were the scares. On the second day out, for instance, coming off the deck in the afternoon (I had straw slippers on my bare feet) I stopped at the open pantry door and spoke to the steward. He was doing something there with his back to me. At the sound of my voice he nearly jumped out of his skin, as the saying is, and incidentally broke a cup.

'What on earth's the matter with you?' I asked, astonished.

He was extremely confused. 'Beg your pardon, sir. I made sure you were in your cabin.'

'You see I wasn't.'

'No, sir. I could have sworn I had heard you moving in there not a moment ago. It's most extraordinary . . . very sorry, sir.'

I passed on with an inward shudder. I was so identified with my secret double that I did not even mention the fact in those scanty, fearful whispers we exchanged. I suppose he had made some slight noise of some kind or other. It would have been miraculous if he hadn't at one time or another. And yet, haggard as he appeared, he looked always perfectly self-controlled, more than calm—almost

invulnerable. On my suggestion he remained almost entirely in the bath-room, which, upon the whole, was the safest place. There could be really no shadow of an excuse for any one ever wanting to go in there, once the steward had done with it. It was a very tiny place. Sometimes he reclined on the floor, his legs bent, his head sustained on one elbow. At others I would find him on the camp-stool, sitting in his grey sleeping-suit and with his cropped dark hair like a patient, unmoved convict. At night I would smuggle him into my bed-place, and we would whisper together, with the regular footfalls of the officer of the watch passing and repassing over our heads. It was an infinitely miserable time. It was lucky that some tins of fine preserves were stowed in a locker in my state-room; hard bread I could always get hold of; and so he lived on stewed chicken, *pâté de foie gras*, asparagus, cooked oysters, sardines—on all sorts of abominable sham delicacies out of tins. My early morning coffee he always drank; and it was all I dared do for him in that respect.

Every day there was the horrible manœuvring to go through so that my room and then the bath-room should be done in the usual way. I came to hate the sight of the steward, to abhor the voice of that harmless man. I felt that it was he who would bring on the disaster of discovery. It hung like a sword over our heads.

The fourth day out, I think (we were then working down the east side of the Gulf of Siam, tack for tack, in light winds and smooth water)—the fourth day, I say, of this miserable juggling with the unavoidable, as we sat at our evening meal, that man, whose slightest movement I dreaded, after putting down the dishes ran up on deck busily. This could not be dangerous. Presently he came down again; and then it appeared that he had remem-



bered a coat of mine which I had thrown over a rail to dry after having been wetted in a shower which had passed over the ship in the afternoon. Sitting stolidly at the head of the table I became terrified at the sight of the garment on his arm. Of course he made for my door. There was no time to lose.

‘Steward,’ I thundered. My nerves were so shaken that I could not govern my voice and conceal my agitation. This was the sort of thing that made my terrifically whiskered mate tap his forehead with his forefinger. I had detected him using that gesture while talking on deck with a confidential air to the carpenter. It was too far to hear a word, but I had no doubt that this pantomime could only refer to the strange new captain.

‘Yes, sir,’ the pale-faced steward turned resignedly to me. It was this maddening course of being shouted at, checked without rhyme or reason, arbitrarily chased out of my cabin, suddenly called into it, sent flying out of his pantry on incomprehensible errands, that accounted for the growing wretchedness of his expression.

‘Where are you going with that coat?’

‘To your room, sir.’

‘Is there another shower coming?’

‘I’m sure I don’t know, sir. Shall I go up again and see, sir?’

‘No! never mind.’

My object was attained, as of course my other self in there would have heard everything that passed. During this interlude my two officers never raised their eyes off their respective plates; but the lip of that confounded cub, the second mate, quivered visibly.

I expected the steward to hook my coat on and come out at once. He was very slow about it; but I dominated my nervousness sufficiently not to shout after him. Suddenly I became aware (it could be

heard plainly enough) that the fellow for some reason or other was opening the door of the bath-room. It was the end. The place was literally not big enough to swing a cat in. My voice died in my throat and I went stony all over. I expected to hear a yell of surprise and terror, and made a movement, but had not the strength to get on my legs. Everything remained still. Had my second self taken the poor wretch by the throat? I don't know what I would have done next moment if I had not seen the steward come out of my room, close the door, and then stand quietly by the sideboard.

'Saved,' I thought. 'But, no! Lost! Gone! He was gone!'

I laid my knife and fork down and leaned back in my chair. My head swam. After a while, when sufficiently recovered to speak in a steady voice, I instructed my mate to put the ship round at eight o'clock himself.

'I won't come on deck,' I went on. 'I think I'll turn in, and unless the wind shifts I don't want to be disturbed before midnight. I feel a bit seedy.'

'You did look middling bad a little while 'ago,' the chief mate remarked without showing any great concern.

They both went out, and I stared at the steward clearing the table. There was nothing to be read on that wretched man's face. But why did he avoid my eyes, I asked myself. Then I thought I should like to hear the sound of his voice.

'Steward!'

'Sir!' Startled as usual.

'Where did you hang up that coat?'

'In the bath-room, sir.' The usual anxious tone.

'It's not quite dry yet, sir.'

For some time longer I sat in the cuddy. Had my double vanished as he had come? But of his coming there was an explanation, whereas his disappearance

would be inexplicable. . . . I went slowly into my dark room, shut the door, lighted the lamp, and for a time dared not turn round. When at last I did I saw him standing bolt upright in the narrow recessed part. It would not be true to say I had a shock, but an irresistible doubt of his bodily existence flitted through my mind. Can it be, I asked myself, that he is not visible to other eyes than mine? It was like being haunted. Motionless, with a grave face, he raised his hands slightly at me in a gesture which meant clearly, 'Heavens! what a narrow escape!' Narrow indeed. I think I had come creeping quietly as near insanity as any man who has not actually gone over the border. That gesture restrained me, so to speak.

The mate with the terrific whiskers was now putting the ship on the other tack. In the moment of profound silence which follows upon the hands going to their stations I heard on the poop his raised voice: 'Hard alee!' and the distant shout of the order repeated on the main-deck. The sails, in that light breeze, made but a faint fluttering noise. It ceased. The ship was coming round slowly; I held my breath in the renewed stillness of expectation; one wouldn't have thought that there was a single living soul on her decks. A sudden brisk shout, 'Main-sail haul!' broke the spell, and in the noisy cries and rush overhead of the men running away with the main-brace we two, down in my cabin, came together in our usual position by the bed-place.

He did not wait for my question. 'I heard him fumbling here and just managed to squat myself down in the bath,' he whispered to me. 'The fellow only opened the door and put his arm in to hang the coat up. All the same——'

'I never thought of that,' I whispered back, even more appalled than before at the closeness of the shave, and marvelling at that something unyielding

in his character which was carrying him through so finely. There was no agitation in his whisper. Whoever was being driven distracted, it was not he. He was sane. And the proof of his sanity was continued when he took up the whispering again.

‘It would never do for me to come to life again.’

It was something that a ghost might have said. But what he was alluding to was his old captain’s reluctant admission of the theory of suicide. It would obviously serve his turn—if I had understood at all the view which seemed to govern the unalterable purpose of his action.

‘You must maroon me as soon as ever you can get amongst these islands off the Cambodge shore,’ he went on.

‘Maroon you! We are not living in a boy’s adventure tale,’ I protested. His scornful whispering took me up.

‘We aren’t indeed! There’s nothing of a boy’s tale in this. But there’s nothing else for it. I want no more. You don’t suppose I am afraid of what can be done to me? Prison or gallows or whatever they may please. But you don’t see me coming back to explain such things to an old fellow in a wig and twelve respectable tradesmen, do you? What can they know whether I am guilty or not—or of *what* I am guilty, either? That’s my affair. What does the Bible say? “Driven off the face of the earth.” Very well. I am off the face of the earth now. As I came at night so I shall go.’

‘Impossible!’ I murmured. ‘You can’t.’

‘Can’t? . . . Not naked like a soul on the Day of Judgement. I shall freeze on to this sleeping-suit. The Last Day is not yet—and . . . you have understood thoroughly. Didn’t you?’

I felt suddenly ashamed of myself. I may say truly that I understood—and my hesitation in letting that

man swim away from my ship's side had been a mere sham sentiment, a sort of cowardice.

'It can't be done now till next night,' I breathed out. 'The ship is on the off-shore tack and the wind may fail us.'

'As long as I know that you understand,' he whispered. 'But of course you do. It's a great satisfaction to have got somebody to understand. You seem to have been there on purpose.' And in the same whisper, as if we two whenever we talked had to say things to each other which were not fit for the world to hear, he added, 'It's very wonderful.'

We remained side by side talking in our secret way—but sometimes silent or just exchanging a whispered word or two at long intervals. And as usual he stared through the port. A breath of wind came now and again into our faces. The ship might have been moored in dock, so gently and on an even keel she slipped through the water, that did not murmur even at our passage, shadowy and silent like a phantom sea.

At midnight I went on deck, and to my mate's great surprise put the ship round on the other tack. His terrible whiskers flitted round me in silent criticism. I certainly should not have done it if it had been only a question of getting out of that sleepy gulf as quickly as possible. I believe he told the second mate, who relieved him, that it was a great want of judgement. The other only yawned. That intolerable cub shuffled about so sleepily and lolled against the rails in such a slack, improper fashion that I came down on him sharply.

'Aren't you properly awake yet?'

'Yes, sir! I am awake.'

'Well, then, be good enough to hold yourself as if you were. And keep a look-out. If there's any current we'll be closing with some islands before daylight.'

The east side of the gulf is fringed with islands, some solitary, others in groups. On the blue background of the high coast they seem to float on silvery patches of calm water, arid and grey, or dark green and rounded like clumps of evergreen bushes, with the larger ones, a mile or two long, showing the outlines of ridges, ribs of grey rock under the dank mantle of matted leafage. Unknown to trade, to travel, almost to geography, the manner of life they harbour is an unsolved secret. There must be villages—settlements of fishermen at least—on the largest of them, and some communication with the world is probably kept up by native craft. But all that forenoon, as we headed for them, fanned along by the faintest of breezes, I saw no sign of man or canoe in the field of the telescope I kept on pointing at the scattered group.

At noon I gave no orders for a change of course, and the mate's whiskers became much concerned and seemed to be offering themselves unduly to my notice. At last I said:

'I am going to stand right in. Quite in—as far as I can take her.'

The stare of extreme surprise imparted an air of ferocity also to his eyes, and he looked truly terrific for a moment.

'We're not doing well in the middle of the gulf,' I continued, casually. 'I am going to look for the land breezes to-night.'

'Bless my soul! Do you mean, sir, in the dark amongst the lot of all them islands and reefs and shoals?'

'Well—if there are any regular land breezes at all on this coast one must get close inshore to find them, mustn't one?'

'Bless my soul!' he exclaimed again under his breath. All that afternoon he wore a dreamy, contemplative appearance which in him was a mark of

perplexity. After dinner I went into my state-room as if I meant to take some rest. There we two bent our dark heads over a half-unrolled chart lying on my bed.

‘Théré,’ I said. ‘It’s got to be Koh-ring. I’ve been looking at it ever since sunrise. It has got two hills and a low point. It must be inhabited. And on the coast opposite there is what looks like the mouth of a biggish river—with some town, no doubt, not far up. It’s the best chance for you that I can see.’

‘Anything. Koh-ring let it be.’

He looked thoughtfully at the chart as if surveying chances and distances from a lofty height—and following with his eyes his own figure wandering on the blank land of Cochin-China, and then passing off that piece of paper clean out of sight into uncharted regions. And it was as if the ship had two captains to plan her course for her. I had been so worried and restless running up and down that I had not had the patience to dress that day. I had remained in my sleeping-suit, with straw slippers and a soft floppy hat. The closeness of the heat in the gulf had been most oppressive, and the crew were used to see me wandering in that airy attire.

‘She will clear the south point as she heads now,’ I whispered into his ear. ‘Goodness only knows when, though, but certainly after dark. I’ll edge her in to half a mile, as far as I may be able to judge in the dark——’

‘Be careful,’ he murmured, warningly—and I realized suddenly that all my future, the only future for which I was fit, would perhaps go irretrievably to pieces in any mishap to my first command.

I could not stop a moment longer in the room. I motioned him to get out of sight and made my way on the poop. That unplayful cub had the

watch. I walked up and down for a while thinking things out, then beckoned him over.

‘Send a couple of hands to open the two quarter-deck ports,’ I said, mildly.

He actually had the impudence, or else so forgot himself in his wonder at such an incomprehensible order, as to repeat:

‘Open the quarter-deck ports! What for, sir?’

‘The only reason you need concern yourself about is because I tell you to do so. Have them open wide and fastened properly.’

He reddened and went off, but I believe made some jeering remark to the carpenter as to the sensible practice of ventilating a ship’s quarter-deck. I know he popped into the mate’s cabin to impart the fact to him because the whiskers came on deck, as it were by chance, and stole glances at me from below—for signs of lunacy or drunkenness, I suppose.

A little before supper, feeling more restless than ever, I rejoined, for a moment, my second self. And to find him sitting so quietly was surprising, like something against nature, inhuman.

I developed my plan in a hurried whisper.

‘I shall stand in as close as I dare and then put her round. I shall presently find means to smuggle you out of here into the sail-locker, which communicates with the lobby. But there is an opening, a sort of square for hauling the sails out, which gives straight on the quarter-deck and which is never closed in fine weather, so as to give air to the sails. When the ship’s way is deadened in stays and all the hands are aft at the main-braces you shall have a clear road to slip out and get overboard through the open quarter-deck port. I’ve had them both fastened up. Use a rope’s end to lower yourself into the water so as to avoid a splash—you know. It could be heard and cause some beastly complication.’



He kept silent for a while, then whispered, 'I understand.'

'I won't be there to see you go,' I began with an effort. 'The rest . . . I only hope I have understood, too.'

'You have. From first to last'—and for the first time there seemed to be a faltering, something strained in his whisper. He caught hold of my arm, but the ringing of the supper bell made me start. He didn't, though; he only released his grip.

After supper I didn't come below again till well past eight o'clock. The faint, steady breeze was loaded with dew; and the wet, darkened sails held all there was of propelling power in it. The night, clear and starry, sparkled darkly, and the opaque, lightless patches shifting slowly against the low stars were the drifting islets. On the port bow there was a big one more distant and shadowily imposing by the great space of sky it eclipsed.

On opening the door I had a back view of my very own self looking at a chart. He had come out of the recess and was standing near the table.

'Quite dark enough,' I whispered.

He stepped back and leaned against my bed with a level, quiet glance. I sat on the couch. We had nothing to say to each other. Over our heads the officer of the watch moved here and there. Then I heard him move quickly. I knew what that meant. He was making for the companion; and presently his voice was outside my door.

'We are drawing in pretty fast, sir. Land looks rather close.'

'Very well,' I answered. 'I am coming on deck directly.'

I waited till he was gone out of the cuddy, then rose. My double moved too. The time had come to exchange our last whispers, for neither of us was ever to hear each other's natural voice.

'Look here!' I opened a drawer and took out three sovereigns. 'Take this, anyhow. I've got six and I'd give you the lot, only I must keep a little money to buy some fruit and vegetables for the crew from native boats as we go through Sunda Straits.'

He shook his head.

'Take it,' I urged him, whispering desperately. 'No one can tell what——'

He smiled and slapped meaningly the only pocket of the sleeping-jacket. It was not safe, certainly. But I produced a large old silk handkerchief of mine, and tying the three pieces of gold in a corner, pressed it on him. He was touched, I suppose, because he took it at last and tied it quickly round his waist under the jacket, on his bare skin.

Our eyes met; several seconds elapsed, till, our glances still mingled, I extended my hand and turned the lamp out. Then I passed through the cuddy, leaving the door of my room wide open. . . . 'Steward!'

He was still lingering in the pantry in the greatness of his zeal, giving a rub-up to a plated cruet-stand the last thing before going to bed. Being careful not to wake up the mate, whose room was opposite, I spoke in an undertone.

He looked round anxiously. 'Sir!'

'Can you get me a little hot water from the galley?'

'I am afraid, sir, the galley fire's been out for some time now.'

'Go and see.'

He fled up the stairs.

'Now,' I whispered, loudly, into the saloon—too loudly, perhaps, but I was afraid I couldn't make a sound. He was by my side in an instant—the double captain slipped past the stairs—through a tiny dark passage . . . a sliding door. We were in

the sail-locker, scrambling on our knees over the sails. A sudden thought struck me. I saw myself wandering barefooted, bareheaded, the sun beating on my dark poll. I snatched off my floppy hat and tried hurriedly in the dark to ram it on my other self. He dodged and fended off silently. I wonder what he thought had come to me before he understood and suddenly desisted. Our hands met gropingly, lingered united in a steady, motionless clasp for a second. . . . No word was breathed by either of us when they separated.

I was standing quietly by the pantry door when the steward returned.

‘Sorry, sir. Kettle barely warm. Shall I light the spirit-lamp?’

‘Never mind.’

I came out on deck slowly. It was now a matter of conscience to shave the land as close as possible—for now he must go overboard whenever the ship was put in stays. Must ! There could be no going back for him. After a moment I walked over to leeward and my heart flew into my mouth at the nearness of the land on the bow. Under any other circumstances I would not have held on a minute longer. The second mate had followed me anxiously.

I looked on till I felt I could command my voice.

‘She will weather,’ I said then in a quiet tone.

‘Are you going to try that, sir?’ he stammered out incredulously.

I took no notice of him and raised my tone just enough to be heard by the helmsman.

‘Keep her good full.’

‘Good full, sir.’

The wind fanned my cheek, the sails slept, the world was silent. The strain of watching the dark loom of the land grow bigger and denser was too much for me. I had shut my eyes—because the ship

must go closer. She must! The stillness was intolerable. Were we standing still?

When I opened my eyes the second view started my heart with a thump. The black southern hill of Koh-ring seemed to hang right over the ship like a towering fragment of the everlasting night. On that enormous mass of blackness there was not a gleam to be seen, not a sound to be heard. It was gliding irresistibly toward us and yet seemed already within reach of the hand. I saw the vague figures of the watch grouped in the waist, gazing in awed silence.

'Are you going on, sir,' inquired an unsteady voice at my elbow.

I ignored it. I had to go on.

'Keep her full. Don't check her way. That won't do now,' I said, warningly.

'I can't see the sails very well,' the helmsman answered me, in strange, quavering tones.

Was she close enough? Already she was, I won't say in the shadow of the land, but in the very blackness of it, already swallowed up as it were, gone too close to be recalled, gone from me altogether.

'Give the mate a call,' I said to the young man who stood at my elbow as still as death. 'And turn all hands up.'

My tone had a borrowed loudness reverberated from the height of the land. Several voices cried out together: 'We are all on deck, sir.'

Then stillness again, with the great shadow gliding closer, towering higher, without a light, without a sound. Such a hush had fallen on the ship that she might have been a bark of the dead floating in slowly under the very gate of Erebus.

'My God! Where are we?'

It was the mate moaning at my elbow. He was thunderstruck, and as it were deprived of the moral support of his whiskers. He clapped his hands and absolutely cried out, 'Lost!'

'Be quiet,' I said, sternly.

He lowered his tone, but I saw the shadowy gesture of his despair. 'What are we doing here?'

'Looking for the land wind.'

He made as if to tear his hair, and addressed me recklessly.

'She will never get out. You have done it, sir. I knew it'd end in something like this. She will never weather, and you are too close now to stay. She'll drift ashore before she's round. O my God!'

I caught his arm as he was raising it to batter his poor devoted head, and shook it violently.

'She's ashore already,' he wailed, trying to tear himself away.

'Is she? . . . Keep good full there!'

'Good full, sir,' cried the helmsman in a frightened, thin, child-like voice.

I hadn't let go the mate's arm and went on shaking it. 'Ready about, do you hear? You go forward'—shake—'and stop there'—shake—'and hold your noise'—shake—'and see these head-sheets properly overhauled'—shake, shake—shake.

And all the time I dared not look toward the land lest my heart should fail me. I released my grip at last and he ran forward as if fleeing for dear life.

I wondered what my double there in the sail-locker thought of this commotion. He was able to hear everything—and perhaps he was able to understand why, on my conscience, it had to be thus close—no less. My first order 'Hard alee!' re-echoed ominously under the towering shadow of Koh-ring as if I had shouted in a mountain gorge. And then I watched the land intently. In that smooth water and light wind it was impossible to feel the ship coming-to. No! I could not feel her. And my second self was making now ready to slip out and lower himself overboard. Perhaps he was gone already . . .?

The great black mass brooding over our very mast-heads began to pivot away from the ship's side silently. And now I forgot the secret stranger ready to depart, and remembered only that I was a total stranger to the ship. I did not know her. Would she do it? How was she to be handled?

I swung the main-yard and waited helplessly. She was perhaps stopped, and her very fate hung in the balance, with the black mass of Koh-ring like the gate of the everlasting night towering over her taffrail. What would she do now? Had she way on her yet? I stepped to the side swiftly, and on the shadowy water I could see nothing except a faint phosphorescent flash revealing the glassy smoothness of the sleeping surface. It was impossible to tell—and I had not learned yet the feel of my ship. Was she moving? What I needed was something easily seen, a piece of paper, which I could throw overboard and watch. I had nothing on me. To run down for it I didn't dare. There was no time. All at once my strained, yearning stare distinguished a white object floating within a yard of the ship's side. White on the black water. A phosphorescent flash passed under it. What was that thing? . . . I recognized my own floppy hat. It must have fallen off his head . . . and he didn't bother. Now I had what I wanted—the saving mark for my eyes. But I hardly thought of my other self, now gone from the ship, to be hidden for ever from all friendly faces, to be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, with no brand of the curse on his sane forehead to stay a slaying hand . . . too proud to explain.

And I watched the hat—the expression of my sudden pity for his mere flesh. It had been meant to save his homeless head from the dangers of the sun. And now—behold—it was saving the ship, by serving me for a mark to help out the ignorance

of my strangeness. Ha! It was drifting forward, warning me just in time that the ship had gathered sternway.

'Shift the helm,' I said in a low voice to the seaman standing still like a statue.

The man's eyes glistened wildly in the binnacle light as he jumped round to the other side and spun round the wheel.

I walked to the break of the poop. On the over-shadowed deck all hands stood by the fore-braces waiting for my order. The stars ahead seemed to be gliding from right to left. And all was so still in the world that I heard the quiet remark 'She's round,' passed in a tone of intense relief between two seamen.

'Let go and haul.

The fore-yards ran round with a great noise, amidst cheery cries. And now the frightful whiskers made themselves heard giving various orders. Already the ship was drawing ahead. And I was alone with her. Nothing! no one in the world should stand now between us, throwing a shadow on the way of silent knowledge and mute affection, the perfect communion of a seaman with his first command.

Walking to the taffrail, I was in time to make out, on the very edge of a darkness thrown by a towering black mass like the very gateway of Erebus—yes, I was in time to catch an evanescent glimpse of my white hat left behind to mark the spot where the secret sharer of my cabin and of my thoughts, as though he were my second self, had lowered himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny.

## LLOYD OSBOURNE

(B. 1868)

### A SON OF EMPIRE

RAKA-HANGA is a dot of an island in the mid-Pacific, and so far from anywhere that it doesn't belong to a group—as most islands do—but is all by its lonesome in the heave and roll of the emptiest ocean in the world. In my time it was just big enough to support two traders, not counting old man Fosby, who had sort of retired and laid down life's burden in a Kanaka shack, where if he did anything at all it was making bonito hooks for his half-caste family or playing the accordion with his trembly old fingers.

It was me and Stanley Hicks that divided the trade of the place, which was poor to middling, with maybe a couple of hundred tons of copra a year and as much pearl shell as the natives cared to get. It was deep shell, you understand, and sometimes a diver went down and never came up, and you could see him shimmering down below like the back of a shark, as dead as a door-nail. Nobody would dive after that, and a whole year might pass with the Kanakas still holding back unless there was a church assessment or a call for something special like a sewing-machine or a new boat. It averaged anywhere from five tons to sixty, and often, as I said, nothing at all.

I had got rooted in Raka-hanga, and so had Stanley Hicks, and though we both had ideas of getting away and often talked of it, we never did—being like people half asleep in a feather bed, with life drifting on unnoticed, and the wind rustling in the



palms, and one summer day so like another that you lost count of time altogether.

You would have to go far to see a prettier island than Raka-hanga, or nicer, friendlier, finer-looking people; and when I say they never watered their copra on us, nor worked any of those heart-breaking boycotts to bring prices down, you can realize how much out of the beaten track it was and how little they had yet learned of civilization. They were too simple and easy-going for their own good and that's a fact, for they allowed David, the Tongan pastor, to walk all over them, which he did right royal with his great, fat, naked feet; and when anything didn't please this here David nor the deacons, they stuck him or her in the coral jail and locked the door on him—or her—as the case might be and usually was.

We were what might be called a republic, having no king and being supposed to be ruled by the old men, who met from time to time in a wicker-work building that looked more like a giant clothes-basket than anything resembling a house. Yes, Raka-hanga was an independent country, and no flag floated over us but our own—or would have if we had had one, which we hadn't. Of course Stanley and I knew it could not last like this for ever, and even the natives weren't unprepared for our being annexed some day by a passing man-of-war—though all hoped it would go on as it was, with nobody interfering with us nor pasting proclamations on trees. It is all very fine to see 'God Save the Queen' or 'Vive la République' at the bottom of a proclamation, but Stanley and I knew it meant taxes and licences and penal servitude if you did this or failed to do that, and all those other blessings that are served out to a Pacific island when one of the great powers suddenly discovers it on the map.

Our republic was more in name than anything else, for old David, the missionary, ruled the island

with a rod of iron, and was so crotchety and tyrannical that no Kanaka could call his soul his own. Every night at nine he stood out in front of his house and rang a hand-bell, and then woe betide any one who didn't go to bed instanter and shut up, no matter if it were in the full of the moon and they in the middle of a game of cards or yarning sociable on an upturned boat.

One had to get up just as military and autocratic—and as for dancing, why the word itself could hardly be said, let alone the actual thing, which meant the jail every time and a dose of the pastor's whip thrown in extra. It was a crime to miss church, and a crime to flirt or make love, and the biggest crime of all was not to come up handsome with church offerings when they were demanded. If you will believe me it was a crime to *grieve* too much if somebody died—if the dead person were married that is, and if you were of the opposite sex and not closely related!

As I said before, the natives were so easy-going that they took it all lying down, and allowed this here David to swell into a regular despot, though there must have been coming on two thousand of them, and him with nothing but his bell and his whip and his big roaring voice. Naturally he did not dare interfere with us white men, though Stanley and I toed the line more than we liked for the sake of business and keeping clear of his ill will. The only one who wasn't scared of the old Tartar, and stood right up to him, was a hulking big Fijian, named Peter Jones. Nobody knew how he came by that name for there wasn't a white drop in his body, he being unusually dark and powerful and full of the Old Nick, and with a mop of hair on him like you never saw, it was that thick and long and stood out on end all round his head, which was the Fiji fashion of wearing it.

Peter could lick his weight in wildcats, as the saying goes, and was always ready to do it at the fall of a hat. He was a bullying, overbearing individual and had terrorized his way into a family and married their daughter, helping himself promiscuous, besides, to anything he fancied, with nobody daring to cross him nor complain. Stanley and I were afraid of him and that's the truth, and gave him a little credit for peace and quietness' sake, which was well worth an occasional can of beef or a fathom or two of Turkey cotton.

Once, when there was a ship in, he got most outrageously drunk, and rolled about the village, singing and yelling—swigging from the bottle he carried and stumbling after the girls, trying to hug them. If ever there was a scandal in Raka-hanga it was the sight of this six-foot-three of raving, roaring savage, rough-housing the place upside down and bellowing insults at the top of his lungs. But nothing was done to stop him till the liquor took its course, and then old David, he gathered the Parliament about him, and ran him into the jail with a one-two-three like a sack of oats.

But Peter Jones was none of your stand-up-at-the-altar-and-repent-boys, being a white man by training, if not by blood, and after he had sobered up, what if his wife didn't smuggle him in a knife, and what if he didn't dig his way out! Yes, sir, that's what Peter Jones did—dug through the gravel floor and tunnelled out, rising from the grave, so to speak, to the general uproar and hullabaloo of the entire settlement. Then—no one stopping him—he armed himself with an old Springfield rifle and an axe and a crowbar, and the cry went up he was going to murder the pastor, with the children running along in front and the women screaming.

But Peter wasn't gunning for any missionary, which even in Raka-hanga might have had a nasty

comeback—the natives being mild but not cowards, and beginning to buzz like hornets and reach for their shark-tooth spears. No, what Peter was inflamed against was the coral jail, which he set at most ferocious with crowbar and axe until it was nothing but a heap of rubbish. Then he shot holes through the galvanized roofing, and burned it in a blazing fire along of the iron-studded door and window framing. By this time the missionary was trying to raise the multitude against Peter, but they were none too fond of the coral jail themselves and did nothing but hoot and shout like a pack of boys at a circus, which indeed it was and enough to make you split your sides laughing. After that Peter was let alone and nobody dared cross him, no matter what he did.

But this is all by the way to give you an idea of what Raka-hanga was like, and make the rest of the yarn the easier to understand. I shall always feel sorry all my life that Stanley and I were off fishing on the windward side of the island and thereby missed Clemm's arrival in the lagoon, which was well over before we got there, with the stern of a ten-oared boat heading for a man-of-war, and Clemm himself standing kind of helpless on the beach in the midst of all his chests and boxes and bedding.

He made a splendid appearance in his white clothes and shirt and pipe-clayed shoes and pith-helmet, being a short, thick-set man with grey hair and a commanding look. When we came running up he spoke to us very grand, though genial, saying: 'Gentlemen, I am the new Resident Deputy Commissioner, and I call on you to assist me raise the flag and annex this island in the name of her Royal and Imperial Majesty, Queen Victoria!'

At this he took his hat off, and we did the same, though I am an American, and then went on to tell

us that he had just been landed by H.M.S. *Ringarooma* to take possession of the island, and would we kindly inform the natives and escort him to the king.

On learning we were a republic and that it would take time to assemble the old men, he condescended to accept my hospitality for a spell, and was most pleased and gracious at the little we could do in his honour. Meanwhile messengers were sent to gather in the chiefs and tell them the great news, and how the Commissioner was soon coming to meet them in the 'Speak-house', as the natives called the wicker-work. Mr. Clemm said the *Ringarooma* had been sent under hurry orders to annex right and left in order to forestall the French, who had broken their international agreement and were hoisting their flag all over the place. He also explained that was the reason why the man-of-war could not stop, it being a neck-and-neck race between her and the French which could reach the Tokelaus first. Between drinks he likewise showed us his commission, which was written very big and imposing on crinkly paper, with seals, where he was called 'Our well-beloved and right trusty James Howard Fitzroy Clemm, Esquire'—as well as the flag he had brought with him, which was an eight-by-twelve ensign, with the halyards all ready to run it up.

I can tell you Stanley and I were mighty proud to escort the Deputy Commissioner to the Parliament, which we did slow and stately in our best pyjamas, with the natives reverencing him as he passed and eyeing us two most respectful. The old men were there in rows, and also David, the pastor, who took the interpreting out of my hands and as usual hogged the whole show. Perhaps it was as well he did, for he had a splendid voice and a booming way of speaking that suited the grandeur of the occasion.

Then Mr. Clemm's commission was read aloud, first by him in English and then by David in Kanaka, and afterwards the Commissioner made a rousing speech, all about the loving English and the low, contemptible French, and at the end he asked everybody to hold up his right hand who wished to be a loyal, faithful, obedient subject of the Great Queen.

Up shot every hand most grateful at the narrow escape they had had of being French; and then outside it was again repeated, even the children holding up their little paws, and the flag hoisted temporary to a coco-nut palm amid shouts of rejoicing led off by Stanley and me and Peter Jones who had followed along after us.

The next question was where to lodge the Commissioner till a proper house could be built for him, and he showed he wasn't a gentleman to be trifled with by cutting short their jabber, and choosing Fono's, which was the finest in the settlement, and ordering him to clear out, bag and baggage—which Fono didn't want to do and objected very crossly till Peter Jones snatched up a rock and ran at him like he meant to pound his head in. This pleased Mr. Clemm so much that he right off appointed Peter marshal of his court at a salary of forty dollars a month, and put him in charge of shifting his things into his new quarters.

I took the liberty of warning Mr. Clemm against the Fijian, but he only threw back his head and told me most cutting to kindly mind my own business. But any rancour I might have felt at this disappeared when he made me clerk of the court, and Stanley tax collector, each at a salary of sixty dollars a month, with David 'Native Adviser and Official Interpreter' at the same figure.

This was the beginning of the new government, with everything old done away with, and the first official sign of it was a brand-new, white-painted

flagpole with crosstrees and ratlines in front of the fine big house that was next built for the Commissioner to live in. The natives had to do this for nothing, supplying forty men, turn and turn about, though the galvanized iron, hardware, paint, varnish, and what not were bought of Stanley and me, and paid for in taxes. It was a very fine place when done, with a broad veranda in front and an inner court behind, where Mr. Clemm used to lie in a striped hammock, waited on hand and foot.

But I fancy the wicked French couldn't have taxed the Kanakas any harder than Mr. Clemm did, which was the best thing in the world for them, considering how slack they were by nature and not given to doing anything they could help. It only needed a little attention to double the copra crop of the island, not to speak of shell—so that the taxes were a blessing in disguise, the natives being better off than they had ever been before. Of course they didn't like it and put up a great deal of opposition till Mr. Clemm raised a Native Constabulary of seven men, commanded by Peter Jones, and all of them armed any way he could, including Stanley's shotgun and my Winchester repeater, old man Fosby's Enfield, and several rusty Springfields pounced on here and there as against the law to own them.

They were tricked out very smart in red *lavas* and white drill coats, and being all of them of the obstreperous, no-good class like Peter, they were soon the terror of the island. Not that Mr. Clemm didn't keep them tight in hand, but when it came to an order of court or any backwardness in taxes he never seemed to care much whom they plundered and beat, which was what they revelled in and thirsted for the chance of.

Old David was the first to feel the weight of authority, and I believe his job of Native Adviser

was merely a plan to keep him in good humour till Mr. Clemm was ready to squash him, which Mr. Clemm did three months later most emphatic. The Kanakas were forbidden to contribute to the church, and the pastor's private laws were abolished, and there was no more excommunicating nor jail for church members, nor any curfew either. The natives went wild with joy—all except a few old soreheads that are always to be found in every community—and the only folks who were now forced to go to church were the Native Constabulary, who lined up regular to keep tab on what the missionary preached, and arrest him for sedition in case he let his tongue run away with him.

In private, however, old David made all the trouble he dared, and tried to hearten up his followers by saying there would be a day of reckoning for Mr. Clemm when the missionary vessel arrived on her annual visit—at which the Commissioner pretended to laugh but couldn't hide he was worried. Leastways he asked a raft of questions about the *Evangel of Hope*, and that with a ruminating look, and about the character of the people in charge, which were Captain Bins and the Reverend T. J. Simpkins. The *Evangel of Hope* never stayed any longer than to land a few stores and hymn-books for the pastor and take off what copra and shell he had acquired by way of church subscriptions. At that time she was about due in two months, and we all laughed at the empty larder she was going to find, though, as I said, Mr. Clemm seemed worried, remarking it was hard to be misrepresented and slandered when his only thought was for the good of the island.

He was certainly upsetting things very lively and bossed the island like it belonged to him. If the natives could play all they wanted, now that David was deposed, they had bumped into something they



had never known before and that was—work. The Commissioner couldn't abide laziness in a Kanaka, and went at them terrific, building a fine road around the island and another across it, with bridges and culverts, where he used to ride of a sundown in a buggy he had bought off Captain Sachs of the *H. L. Tiernan*, with men tugging him instead of horses, and the Native Constabulary trotting along in the rear like a Royal Progress.

He built a fine-appearing wharf, too, and an improved jail with a cement floor, and heaven help anybody who threw fish-guts on the shore or didn't keep his land as clean as a new pin. There was a public well made in the middle of the settlement, with cement steps and a white-painted fence to keep away the pigs; and the natives, though they hated to work, were proud, too, of what they had done, and I doubt if they had ever been so prosperous or freer of sickness. I know Stanley and I doubled our trade, in spite of having to take out heavy licences, which meant that not only we, but everybody else were that much better off. Petty thieving disappeared entirely, and likewise all violence, and one of the Commissioner's best reforms was a land court where titles were established and boundaries marked out, that stopping the only thing the Kanakas ever seriously quarrelled about. Six months of the Commissioner had revolutionized the island, and few would have cared to go back to the old loose days when your only Supreme Court was the rifle hanging on your wall.

Well, it grew nearer and nearer for the *Evangel of Hope* to arrive, and Mr. Clemm he began to do a most extraordinary thing, which was nothing else than a large cemetery! Yes, sir, that's what Mr. Clemm did, tearing down five or six houses for the purpose on the lagoon side, nigh the wharf, and planting rows on rows of white headstones, with

low mounds at each, representing graves. There must have been a couple of hundred of them, and often it was a whitewashed cross instead of a stone, or maybe a pointed stake—the whole giving the impression of a calamity that had suddenly overtaken us.

It was no good asking him what it was for; the Commissioner wasn't a man to be questioned when he didn't want to be; all he said was that Stanley and I were to stick inside our stores when the ship came and not budge an inch till we were told. With us orders were orders, but the Kanakas were panicky with terror, and that cemetery with nobody in it seemed to them like tempting Providence. It took all of Mr. Clemm's authority to keep them quiet, and it got out that the Commissioner was expecting the end of the world, and the graves were for those that wouldn't go to heaven! Kanakas are like that, you know—spreading the silliest rumours and making a lot out of nothing—though in this case they couldn't be blamed for being considerable scared. But Mr. Clemm knew how to turn everything to account, and on the principle that the church was the safest place to be found in on the Day of Judgment, ordered that everybody should go there the moment he fired three pistol shots from his veranda. I noticed, however, that the Native Constabulary seemed to be taking the end of the world mighty calm, which looked like they had been tipped off ahead for something quite different.

But the meaning of the cemetery appeared later when one morning, along of ten or so, my little boy came running in to say the *Evangel* was sighted in the pass. Of course, I stuck indoors, mindful of instructions, though that didn't prevent me from looking out of my upper window and taking in all that happened. The first was a tremendous yellow flag raised on the Commissioner's staff, and the second were those three pistol shots which were to

announce the Day of Judgement. Then you ought to have seen the settlement scoot! There was a rush for the church like the animals at the Ark, though old David, the pastor, wasn't any Noah. Him and the deacons were led down to the jail and locked in, and then Peter Jones and his constables divided into two parties—three of them returning to the church, while the other three with Peter got a boat ready, with another yellow flag in the stern.

By this time the missionary vessel was well up under a spanking spread of canvas, with the water hissing at her bows and parting white and sparkling in a way dandy to watch. You could almost feel her shiver at the sight of Peter's yellow flag rowing towards her, and through the glass I noticed a big commotion aboard, with half a dozen racing up the rigging and making signs at those below. It was plainer than words that they had seen the cemetery and were struck of a heap, which was no wonder considering how new and calamitous it looked, with them rows on rows of neat little headstones and nicely mounded graves.

She never even dropped her anchor nor lowered her gangway, but hove to, short; and when Peter came up he was made to lay on his oars and keep his distance, yelling what he had to say with both hands at his face, while the captain he yelled back with a speaking trumpet. Of course I didn't hear a word, but it was easy enough to put two and two together, remembering the sea meaning of a yellow flag which is seldom else than small-pox. Yes, that was why we had all took and died in the new cemetery, and that was why the settlement looked so lifeless and deserted! After no end of a pow-wow they hoisted out a boat, and when it was loaded to the gunwales with stores and cases, it was cast off for Peter to pick up and take in tow. It held half a

ton of medical comforts, and I often had the pleasure of drinking some of them afterwards on Mr. Clemm's veranda, where we all agreed it was prime stuff and exactly suited to our complaints.

What old David thought of it all through the bars of the coral jail can only be left to the imagination. He had been banking on the *Evangel* to turn the scales against Mr. Clemm, and there she was heading out of the lagoon again, not to return for another year! We celebrated it that night with medical comforts unstinted, while the natives they celebrated, too, thankful to find the world still here and the Day of Judgement postponed. Old David wrote a red-hot protest, countersigned by the deacons, and not knowing what else to do with it, sealed it in a demijohn and threw it into the sea, where like enough it still is, bobbing around undelivered to the missionary society and still waiting for the angels to take charge of it.

Mr. Clemm's next move was to start building a small cutter of twenty tons, which he named the *Felicity* and charged to the government as an official yacht. Old man Fosby had been a shipwright in years gone by, and under his direction the Kanakas made a mighty fine job of the little vessel, which was fitted up regardless and proved to be remarkably fast and weatherly. She was the apple of the Commissioner's eye, with a crew of four in uniform, and a half-caste Chinaman named Henry for captain, whom he had persuaded to desert from a German schooner where he was mate. Mr. Clemm was so fond of taking short cruises in the *Felicity* that we never gave his coming and going much thought, till one day he went off and never came back! Yes, sir, clean disappeared over the horizon and was never seen again from that day to this, nor the party with him which included several very fine-looking young women!

The natives took it like the loss of a father, which indeed it was, Mr. Clemm being a grand man and universally beloved—kindly yet strict, and always the soul of justice. After giving him up altogether for lost, we put seals on his private effects, and Peter Jones took charge of the government, advised by Stanley and me. It showed the splendid influence Mr. Clemm had had that Peter had become quite a model, and instead of breaking loose was all on the side of law and order. Our idea was to hold the fort until a new Commissioner might be sent, and the only slight change we made was to double our salaries. The natives had grown so used to civilized government that they made no trouble, and we three might have been governing the island yet if a man-of-war hadn't suddenly popped in.

It was the *Ringarooma*, the selfsame ship that had landed Mr. Clemm some eighteen months before, and Stanley and I were the first to board her, meeting the captain at the break of the poop, just when he had come down from the bridge.

'I have the honour to report the disappearance of Deputy Commissioner James Howard Fitzroy Clemm,' said I. 'He sailed from here on March sixteenth in the government yacht *Felicity*, and has never been seen nor heard from since.'

The captain, who was a sharp, curt man, looked puzzled.

'I don't know what you're talking about,' he said, as abrupt as a thunderbolt.

'Why, sir, you landed him yourself,' said Stanley, 'and the same day he took possession of the island and hoisted the British flag.'

'Annexed us,' said I.

The captain frowned very angry, like if we were making sport of him we should fast rue it.

'I never landed anybody here but a fellow named Baker,' he said. 'I deported him from the Ellice

Islands for sedition, bigamy, selling gin to the natives, suspected arson, and receiving stolen goods. If he called himself a Deputy Commissioner he was a rank impostor, and had no more authority to annex this island than you have.'

Months afterwards we learned that instead of being lost in the *Felicity* like we all had thought, Clemm had turned pirate in a small way down to the westward till the natives took and ate him at Guadalcanaar.

## THE DEVIL'S WHITE MAN

WE were all lying on the floor of Letonu's big house, Tautala and I side by side, our heads both pillowed on the same bamboo. About us on the mats the whole family lay outstretched in slumber, save little Titi, who was droning on a jews' harp, and my coxswain, George Leapai, who was playing a game of draughts with the chief. The air was hot and drowsy, and the lowered eaves let through streaks of burning sunshine, outlining a sort of pattern on an old fellow who moaned occasionally in his sleep.

'In the White Country,' said Tautala, 'didst thou ever happen to meet a chief named Patsy?—a beautiful young man with sea-blue eyes and golden hair?'

'What was his other name?' I asked.

Tautala could not recall it, the foreign stutter being so unrememberable. Indeed, she doubted almost if she had ever heard it. 'We called him Patsy,' she said, 'and he used to tell us he was descended from a line of kings.'

'Wasn't it O' something?' I inquired.

No, she couldn't remember. It was long ago, when she was a little child and knew nothing; but

she had loved Patsy, and it was a sad day to her when the devil took him.

'Tell me about it,' I said. 'I have never heard that *tala*.'

'Oh, it is a true story,' she said; 'for was not my own sister Java married to Patsy, and did I not see it all with my own eyes, from the beginning even to the end? But thou must strengthen thyself to hear it, for it is a tale of sadness.'

'I will strive to bear it,' I replied.

'Well, it was this way,' she began. 'Many years ago a steamer reached our bay, and it was neither a man-of-war, nor a trading-vessel, nor a ship of pleasuring; and the hold of it was filled with nothing but rope, miles and miles of rope, all of a single piece like a ball of great string; nor was the least piece of it for sale; no, not even though a ton of copra were offered for a single fathom. The officers of the ship were most agreeable people, and so polite that, except for the colour of their skins, you would never think them white men at all; and the captain gave my father his photograph, and made for us a feast on board his ship, of sardines and tea, so that we were soon very friendly together and almost like members of one family. Then the captain begged my father's permission to build a little house on the edge of the bay, which was no sooner asked than done; for behold, it was in measured pieces for the building. Farther inland, near the old *vi-tree*, another house was raised, this also of boards previously cut and prepared. Then the end of the big rope was carried to the beach-house in a boat, and made fast to all manner of strange *tongafiti* within, some that ticked like clocks, and others that went "whirr, whirr", like a bird with a broken wing. Here, in the middle of it all, a shining chair was prepared for Patsy to sit in and a big desk for Patsy to write at. But to the inland house was brought his

bed, and countless cases of sardines and pea-soup, and all the many things needed for the comfort and well-being of a white man.

‘ When all was thus ready to the captain’s liking, he blew his whistle and sailed out of the bay, leaving Patsy singly to take care of the end of the big rope. This Patsy did with assiduity, so that there was never a morning but found him sitting beside it, and seldom an afternoon or evening he did not visit it at intervals. Sometimes the rope would hold him there the whole night, saying without end, “ click, click, whirr, whirr ”, as its manner was, so that I would fall asleep with the light of Patsy’s lamp in my eyes, and wake again at dawn to find it still burning; and if we went down to the shore, as we often did at first in our curiosity, we would see the white man lying asleep in his chair, his cold pipe on the table beside him. People asked one another the meaning of a rope so singular, and wondered ceaselessly as to the nature of Patsy’s concern with it. From all the villages expeditions came in crowded boats to behold the marvel with their own eyes, so that they, too, might hear it say “ click, click, whirr, whirr ”, as its manner was, and stare the while at Patsy through the window. Songs were made about the rope, some of them gay, others grave and beautiful, with parables; it became a proverb hereabouts to say “ as long as Patsy’s rope ”, meaning a thing without end, as the perpetual crying of a child, or the love of a maid for a man.

‘ Thou must not think, Siosi, that Patsy was not often asked the reason of his strange employment, and a thousand questions besides about the wonderful rope; but at first he knew nothing of our language, and when people would point at it and say, “ click, click, whirr, whirr ”, in mockery of what it uttered continually, Patsy would only smile and repeat back to them, “ click, click, whirr, whirr ”,



so that nothing was accomplished. But he was so gentle and well-mannered, and so generous with his property, that one could hardly count him a white man at all; and those who had at first mistrusted his presence in our village began soon to love him like a relation. No music-box was sweeter than his voice, and often on a moonlight night the whole village would gather round his house to hear him sing, or to see him dance hornpipes on his veranda.

‘One day, in a boat from Safotulafai, there arrived a native of this island who had long been absent, sailing in the white men’s ships. This man being, of course, familiar with the white stutter, it occurred to Nehemiah the pastor (who had long been troubled by the matter of the rope) that here, at last, was the means of learning the truth from Patsy. Whereupon a meeting of the village chiefs was summoned in the house of Nehemiah; and after a great deal of speech-making it was determined to wait on Patsy in a body, Tomasi, the seaman, going with them to interpret.

‘Patsy was at his usual place beside the big rope, smoking his pipe and hearkening to the voice as it said “click, click, whirr, whirr”, as its manner was. My father, Letonu, was the first to speak; then Nehemiah the pastor; Tomasi translating every word, as had been previously agreed. They both asked for an explanation of the great rope, and why it had been made fast to our island, and where it went to underneath the sea, and the reason of its continually saying “click, click, whirr, whirr”.

‘Patsy took some thought to answer, and when at last he spoke, his words overwhelmed every one with astonishment and fear. It seemed that the devil was afraid that our village was becoming too good; for being himself so busy in Tonga and Fiji and the White Country, he could not give our place the proper oversight; and was mortified to see that

every Aunu'u dead person went straight to heaven. Thereupon he had run this cable from hell, and had hired Patsy for a hundred dollars a month to warn him when anything bad was happening. Patsy explained that the great rope was like a dog: one pinched his tail here and he barked there; thus signals were exchanged, as had been earlier agreed upon, so that two barks meant A, and three meant B, and so on through the *alafapeta*.

'Then Nehemiah asked him in a trembling voice (for horror of the devil was upon them all) how dared he serve the Evil One for the sake of a few dollars this month and that, thus imperilling his own immortal soul for ever. But Patsy answered that the White Country was cold and barren, and fuller of men than our beach of grains of sand. He said that the lands, such as they were, belonged only to a few, and those who possessed none must needs seek a living where they could, or die of hunger in the road. All this was borne out by Tomasi, who himself had seen old white chieftainesses begging for food in the White Country, and little children perishing unrelieved. Patsy said that when a man was wanted to do a thing for hire, a hundred offered themselves only to be turned away, so great was the misery of the White Country, so mean the hearts of those who were rich. Whereupon, said Patsy, he had been glad to take the devil's money and do the devil's work, for other choice there was none.

'Then said Letonu, my father, "Patsy, thou must leave the devil and cease to do his bidding; and though we have no hundred dollars, we can give thee, here in Aunu'u, everything else the heart of man desires: *taro*, bread-fruit, yams, pigs, *valo*, squid, and chickens, wild doves in their season, and good fish for every day of the year; and I will take thee to be my son, to live with me in my fine house and share with me everything I possess."

‘ But Patsy only shook his head, and the rope, seemingly terrified lest it were about to lose him, began to click convulsively and without ceasing. Patsy kept hearkening to it while he listened also to my father, which he did with a divided face, like one hearing two voices at once. He said he thanked my father very much for his kindness, but the fact was, he liked the devil, who was now to him almost a member of his own family, and unfailing with the money, one hundred dollars this month and that. Then Nehemiah made another speech, full of piety and warning, and thereupon finding that nothing could turn Patsy’s rock-like heart, he rose slowly to his feet and led the party out of doors. There a new discussion took place, the pastor proposing to kill Patsy that night and burn down his house; my father resisting him and saying that he would permit no harm to come to his friend the white man, whether he belonged to the devil or not.

‘ I don’t know how it was, but from the day of that meeting Patsy began greatly to love my father, and half his time he spent in our house and near him, so that the neighbours marvelled about it and were crazed with envy. He gave my father a black coat to wear on Sundays, and cartridges for his gun, and nightly they took lessons together in our language, Letonu teaching him to say our words, while Patsy wrote them down on a sheet of paper. Nehemiah preached against us in the church, and would have stopped my father’s communion ticket, but Letonu said he would shoot him, if he did, with both barrels of his gun.

‘ One day my sister Java returned from Savalalo, where she had been living in the family of my uncle. She was a girl beautiful to look at, and so tall and graceful that there was not a young man in the village but whose heart burned at the sight of her. Of them all Patsy alone seemed not to care; and in

the evenings, when his devil work was done and he would romp with us on the mats or talk with my father about foreign countries, he never had as much as a glance for my sister; while she, on her side, treated him always with disdain, and often kept away from the house when she knew him to be there. I think Patsy must somehow have found this out, for one night he told us that he would never come back again, as Java hated him; and he kissed us all, and departed sorrowfully into the darkness. After that, when he was not busy in the devil-house, he took long walks into the bush with his gun, or sat solitary on his veranda, reading a book; at night he sang no more, nor danced hornpipes, but read and read with a sad face, like a person who mourned a relation.

‘We were angry with Java for having driven Patsy away, and told her to go back to Savalalo and let us have our darling; but she seemed not to care for what we said, and only answered that she hoped never to see the devil’s white man again. My father, who loved Patsy, was greatly vexed with her, though he said little at first, thinking that our friend would soon return and that Java would grow ashamed. But when day after day passed and he stayed away continually, my father talked to Java with severity, and bade her go down to the devil-house and ask Patsy’s pardon for her wickedness. She was very loath to obey, and only went at last when Letonu threatened to send her lashed like a pig to a pole, and pretended to call his young men together for that purpose. I was told to go with her, for thou knowest our custom forbidding a young girl to go anywhere alone, lest people should talk and take away her reputation. But I felt sorry for Patsy as I walked behind my sister down the path to his house, for she carried herself defiantly, and there were tears of anger in her beautiful eyes.

‘We found Patsy sitting, as usual, in the devil-

house, the great rope tail clicking at his elbow with messages from hell; and though he sprang up smiling when Java opened the door, I thought his face looked sad and changed. She bade me stay outside, and as she seated herself in Patsy's chair and began to explain the errand on which she had come, I could see that her lips were trembling. For a long time I heard them talking in low voices, and then, growing weary of waiting, I fell asleep on the warm door-step. I do not know how long I slept, but when I at last awoke I could still hear the unceasing murmur of their voices inside the room, sweet and soft, as of pigeons cooing in the mountains. I turned the knob of the door and went in; and there, to my astonishment, I beheld my sister in Patsy's arms, her head buried in his breast, her hands clasped thus about his neck, while he was talking foolishly like a mother to her nursing child. At the sight of me they sprang apart, laughing loudly like children at play; and when I asked Java if she had given her message, they both laughed more than ever and caught each other's hands.

'On our return, Java asked me to say nothing of what I had seen; and told me, in answer to my questions, that Patsy had been secretly breaking his heart for her, though she had never known it; and that she, no less, had been delirious for the love of him. She said, too, that he was the most beautiful man in the world, and wise and good above all others, and that her love for him was so great that it almost choked her. When I spoke doubtfully of the devil, she said that was all a *pepelo*, a joke of Patsy's; that the rope was what she called a *telenafu*, which ran under the sea from one country to another, telling the news of each. She said that Patsy had explained everything to her, and had even shown her the little pots of thunder and lightning with which the *telenafu* was controlled.

‘ It was not long after this that Patsy and Java were married by the pastor Nehemiah, my father giving them a wedding feast the like of which had never before been seen in Aunu’u, so innumerable were the pigs, so gorgeous the fine mats and offerings. Java went to live in the inland house, and wore a gold ring on her finger and new dresses every day. Patsy gave her another sewing-machine in the place of the old one, and a present of two chests for her clothes; and every day she ate sardines and salt beef like a white person. At first she was pleased with everything, and her face was always smiling with her happiness; but as days grew on she began to tire of the white way—which, as thou knowest, Siosi, is relentless and unchanging—and of the work, which is continual. A daughter of a chief lives easily in Raka-hanga, and little is expected of her, for there are girls to wait on her and men to do the heavy labour. Java grew sad in her elegant house, and cared less and less to paint the stove with blacking and wash greasy dishes all day, while the village maids were sporting in the lagoon or fishing by torchlight on the reef. She opened her distressed heart to Patsy, and old Ta’a was called in, at a monthly wage of three dollars, to carry the burden of these unending tasks. But old Ta’a was a busybody and a thief, and the lies she said with her tongue were worse to be endured than even the loss of kerosene and rice which took place continually. Every day something was taken, and when Patsy wondered and complained, the old one said the fault was Java’s for giving to her family like a delirious person. Were I to get a biscuit, the old one changed it into six; and were Letonu to beg a little tea and sugar for his cough, it became transformed in the telling into many basket-loads. On the other side, Ta’a slowly embittered Java’s mind against her husband, telling her that the mar-

riage was no true marriage, and that when Patsy saw a prettier face he would not scruple to cast her off. So the old woman stayed on and thrived, like a fat maggot in a bread-fruit, while Java cried in secret and Patsy grew daily more downcast and silent.

‘ At last the storm burst which had so long been gathering, and the little house that had been so joyful now shook with the sound of quarrelling voices. Java took her golden ring and threw it on the floor, and with it her golden comb, her much-prized ear-rings, and the brooch which in years gone by had belonged to Patsy’s mother in the White Country; she stripped off her dress, her shoes and stockings, even the ribbon from her long black hair; and then, half naked, she returned to our father’s house.

‘ Letonu was, of course, much concerned, and went down immediately to see Patsy in order to make things smooth again. But the white man was sullen and proud, and would talk of nothing, except that Java could do as she pleased, and that it was the same to him whether she stayed or went. My father, who had been a handsome man in his youth and knew the ways of women, urged Patsy a thousand times to make it up quickly with his wife, telling him to put his arms round her and kiss her and all would be well. “Thou mayst know much about the *telenafu*, and how to keep thunder and lightning in pots,” said my wise father, “but assuredly, Patsy, thou art ignorant of the hearts of women.” He told him that Java was already repentant and ashamed, and, like a person on the top of a high wall, a push would send her either way. But Patsy, like a little sulky child, sat in his chair and refused to speak, while Ta’a rattled the dishes and laughed sideways to herself. It was sad, when my father returned, to see the look that Java gave him. Her

hot fit was already past, and her face was full of longing and sorrow; and on his saying that nothing could be accomplished, she lay down on a mat, and remained there all day like a sick person. She lay thus for nearly a week; and if we asked her anything, she would only groan and turn away her head. She was waiting for her man to come to her; but to him there was no such intention; for he stayed shut up in the devil-house, or wandered uselessly in the bush by himself.

‘At last she got up, more dead than living, so thin she was and changed; and calling for food, she ate with the voracity of a starving person; and then she bathed, and did her hair with flowers, and put on the poor clothes she had worn as a maid. “Behold,” she said, “I am now one of the *awaluma* and no longer married.” And from that day she who had been the most circumspect girl in the village, and the best behaved, became swiftly a run-wild-in-the-bush, going everywhere unattended, and sitting up with the young men at night, so that people called her a *paumotu*, and her communion ticket was withdrawn.

‘Patsy never lacked for news of her down-going, for old Ta’a still kept house for him; and no tale was ever told of Java but the old one brought it to him, and more also, conceived by her lying heart. Patsy never tried to see his wife or to do anything to bring about peace between them; and if he passed her in the path he would turn away his head, even if it were night, and she alone with another man. Once, only, he showed that he still remembered her at all, at a time when she was possessed of a devil and like to die; then he came to our house, and felt her hands, and gave her medicines from a little box, and told my father to do this and that. And when she grew better and able to sit up, he sent us salt beef and sardines for her well-being.



' Now it happened there belonged to Ta'a's family a girl named Sina, a thin, hungry piece with a canoe-nose like a white man's, and a face so unsightly that it resembled a pig's; and if she went anywhere the children would cry after her, " Pig-face, Pig-face! " like that, so that her name of Sina was forgotten, and even members of her family called her unmindfully by the other. Compared to Java, who was tall and beautiful like a daughter of chiefs, this little Sina was no more than a half-grown child; and when she was stripped for bathing, behold, you could count the ribs of her body. But Ta'a brought her every day to Patsy's house, so that by degrees he became accustomed to the sight of her; and all the time the old one kept telling him that the little Pig-face loved him—which, perhaps, indeed was true, for none of our young men ever looked twice her way, except to laugh, and she might have stayed out all night and no one would have thought to speak against her character. Patsy was kind and gentle to her, as he was to every one save poor Java; and the little Pig-face followed him like a dog, and lay at his feet at night, while he read and read on his front veranda. So slavish was her soul that she would have kissed his feet if he had kicked her, and nothing pleased her so much as to sit beside him when he slept and keep the flies from off his face. In the end, of course, there happened that which Ta'a had long been planning: Patsy took the little Pig-face to live with him, and pacified her father with two kegs of beef and fifteen silver dollars.

' When the news reached Java she was consumed with a frightful anger, and spoke wildly and murderously, like a drunken white man, clenching her fists and kicking with her legs. She set to sharpening a knife upon a stone, and we saw that she meant to cut off the little Pig-face's nose; for, as thou knowest,

Siosi, such is our custom here when one woman wrongs another. She called together all the old ladies of the family, and they took counsel with one another in a secret place, arranging between them a scheme for Sina's capture. But the little Pig-face was cowardly beyond anything ever before known; she bathed not, neither did she wash nor walk about, but lay all day, trembling and noisome, at Patsy's feet. Once, indeed, she was nearly caught, when upward of a month had passed and she had grown careless in her watching. In the middle of the night the house was set on fire, and as the two rushed out in confusion, Sina was seized in the arms of a dozen women. Had it not been for the darkness, which made seeing difficult, her canoe-nose would have been swiftly lost to her; but for light they had need to drag her to the burning house, she screaming the while like a hundred pigs. Patsy knew instantly what was happening, and began to fire his pistol in the air as he ran to his partner's help, giving no thought at all to his perishing house. It was well for the little Pig-face that he did so, for the knife had already sunk below the skin, and a twist would have left her noseless.

'As for the house, it burned and burned until nothing was left of it, though the most of what it held was carried out in safety. The next morning Patsy moved everything down to the devil-house, making of it a fort, with a high fence of wire all round, full of barbs and points for the lacerating of flesh. And the little Pig-face, with her nose tied up in cloths, ran this way and that, helping him with nails, while Java and I lay in a hiding-place and counted her ribs.

'Thou wouldst have thought that Java might now have rested in her anger, for Patsy's house was consumed and her rival had felt the sharp edge of her knife. But there was no appeasing Java's heart; and

wicked though she was herself, and misconducted, she still could not endure to be supplanted by another. My father spoke to her with severity, saying that she had done all that our custom demanded, and that there must now be peace and forgetting. But the blood came hotly into her face, and she answered not a word, nor made the least sign to obey Letonu's words. Then I saw with a certainty that the war with Sina, far from being finished, was only just beginning; and my body quivered all over with the fear of what was to come.

' For a long time, however, Java did nothing, and went about as usual, seeming to take no further thought. The old women of the family returned to their ordinary occupations, and no longer lay banded in places where Sina might pass. It would have mattered nothing if they had, for the little Pig-face stuck to her house like a barnacle to a rock; and except on Sundays, when she went to church between Patsy and 'Ta'a, we never saw the least hair of her head. But Java knew of means more potent than knives for the undoing of a worthless person, and she sought out Malesa, the old wizard of Aleipata, to whom one went ordinarily for love-philtres and medicines. For a dollar he gave Java a curse on a sheet of paper, and told her to nail it to the church door on the following Sunday. This she did, to the great indignation of Nehemiah and the elders, though to no purpose so far as concerned the little Pig-face, who happened that day and all the Sundays after to keep away from church, like a heathen in the Black Islands. For what worth is a curse if thy enemy reads it not, nor goest even near the door on which it is placed? Is it not like firing a bullet in the air, hurting nothing?

' So Java returned again to Malesa the wizard, and, for lack of better gifts, she carried with her the sewing-machine she had possessed before her marriage. But the old man said he must have more, and

spoke like one delirious, of a hundred dollars and a boat; and when she cried out, he laid his skinny hand on her shoulder and looked a long time into her eyes, and then turned the wheel of the sewing-machine to show that it was broken. But Java's heart was stronger than a man's and full of hatred; so instead of shrinking back, as most women would have done, she told him boldly to name some other price, thinking, perhaps, to give a finger, as Fetuao had done when her husband was perishing with the measles.

"Thy long, curly hair," said Tingelau, slowly, "and I will make of it a head-dress for my son."

"I will give thee that and more, also," said Java, with the tears in her eyes, for there was to her nothing so beautiful as her hair.

'Then, behold, a strange thing happened, for as she knelt before the wizard and undid the knot of her hair, letting it tumble over her bosom like a cascade, the old man touched it not with the scissors in his hand, no, not even cutting so much as a single hair.

"Java," he said, "thou art too beautiful to mar. Some other girl must provide a head-dress for my son, and thou shalt return perfect as thou camest; though I shall retain the sewing-machine for my pains, and from time to time, without fail, thou shalt give me a silver dollar until five be reached. And for this small, insignificant reward I shall prepare thee a curse the like of which no wizard ever made before—a curse which beside the other shall be as a man to a child, so that the whole world shall tremble and the dead turn in their graves."

'Accordingly, in three days my sister returned to Aleipata, where old Malesa, faithful to his word, handed her the curse he had been so assiduously preparing. Ah, Siosi, the reading of it was enough to make one's blood run cold, and palsy the hand

that held the written sheet. The little Pig-face was cursed outside and inside, in this world and the next world, part by part, so that nothing was forgotten, even to the lobes of her ears and the joints of her toes. There was nothing of her but what was to be scorched with fire, torn away with pincers, scratched, pierced, and destroyed with pointed sticks; lo, she would scream for death while the sharks fought for her dismembering flesh and squid sucked out her eyes, no one being at hand to give her the least assistance. Java smiled as she read the curse aloud, and took counsel with Tu, the brave and handsome, who had agreed to nail it to Patsy's door.

'It was black night when Tu made the attempt, holding the paper in his mouth like a dog as he climbed the scratching wall of wire. At every moment Java and I expected to hear the explosion of a gun or some sudden sound of awakening from within the devil-house; yet nothing reached our ears but the beating of our own anxious hearts. After a long while we heard Tu whispering in the darkness beside us, and our first thought was that he had failed. But we were wrong, for Tu had succeeded in every way, and that with the utmost secrecy and skill. Then we went and lay behind a big bush about a hundred fathoms inland of the house, so that we might see with advantage what was to happen in the morning; and Java and I petted Tu, and talked to him sweetly, for he had a brave heart, and his handsome body was everywhere torn with the points of wire.

'*Panga!* Siosi, never was a dawn so slow to come as the one we then waited for, nor any so bitter and chill. Our teeth clicked in our heads, and though we lay closer together than a babe to its nursing mother, or soldiers to one another in the bush, we nearly died with the cold, like people in the White Country. When at last the sun rose in a haze like that of blood

and smoke commingled, we felt, indeed, that the curse was already at work; for the air turned sultry beyond all believing, so that we breathed suffocatingly, and endured the taste of matches in our throats and mouths. Tu said prayers—very good prayers and long, which he had learned in the missionary college before he had been expelled; all of them about the beauty of holiness and well-doing. But Java attended to none of these things, nor seemed to care whether we ourselves lived or died, for her eyes were ever on Patsy's house.

'Patsy himself was the first to come out, leaving the door open behind him, so that the curse was unluckily hidden from his view. He had clubs in his hands, which he twirled in the air as his manner was every morning for the strengthening of his arms. After a few movements he called out to the little Pig-face, saying, "Sina, Sina," like that. "Come out to thy work, thou idle one." Thereupon she too appeared, rubbing her eyes, and in her hands were two clubs like those of Patsy's. But instead of leaving open the door, as her partner had done, she closed it with a push of her hand, and lo, the curse shone white upon it like a splash of lime on a dark cloth. At the sight of it she shrieked to Patsy, and together, side by side, they read what was there written, clinging to each other with fainting hearts.

'When Patsy had read it to an end, he uttered a great, mocking laugh, and struck the paper with his club, so that the whole house shook, and old Ta'a came tumbling out like a scared rat. Then he laughed again until the whole bay re-echoed round, and every time he laughed his voice grew more shrill and screaming, like that of a woman in a fit. But there was no laughter at all in the little Pig-face, who went and lay down in the sand, hiding her eyes with her hands. And old Ta'a, the thief,

the evil-hearted, the out-islander, she tore down the curse with derisive shoutings, and danced on it a shameful dance which is prohibited by the church. But for all that, we could see that she and Patsy were greatly discountenanced, as well they might have been; for who could read such a curse without trembling, or regard with calm the smoky air now thick with the smell of matches? As for the little Pig-face, she was helped inside the house like a drowning person from the sea, for her legs would no longer carry her, and she could not breathe for very terror. The clubs were left untouched where they had fallen; and when Patsy and 'Ta'a had carried Sina into the devil-house they shut the door and locked themselves within.

' I don't know how long it was after this that we lay still spying from our *ti'a*, but it seemed to me like the space of many hours. For my part, I should have gladly returned home, for I was gnawed with hunger, and stiff with the cold night watching; so also was Tu, who spoke piteously of his love for Java, and how it might be the means, through this lawless dabbling with the unseen world, of cutting him off in his prime. But so rock-like was Java's heart, so fierce the flame of her revenge, that she had no compassion for this beautiful young man, nor a single word for the comfort of his spirit. With her burning eyes fixed on Patsy's house, she lay motionless on the ground like a dead person, her only thought to see the curse accomplished.

' Suddenly we were startled by a peal of thunder; low at first, and then tumultuously rising, which, with repeated explosions like those of cannon, seemed to shake the island to its bottommost roots. We jumped to our feet, clinging wildly to one another, while the earth shook under us like the sea, and the skies above were rent with a thousand burstings. Even as we stood there, swaying and horror-stricken,

I felt Java's fingers tighten on my arm and heard her voice in my ear, crying, "Look, look!" And behold! what did I see but Patsy's house rising in the air and darting seaward at the tail of the great rope, which, hand over fist, the devil was now pulling in from hell. The rope was covered with long, green sea-grass, and all manner of curious shells, which sparkled and twisted in the sun; and it went thus in jumps, like the crackling of a mighty whip; and with every jerk the house skimmed forward like a boatswain-bird, showing us at a broken window the faces of the accursed, who with frenzied movements climbed the one above the other, striving to escape like a tangle of worms in a pot, each one pushing away the other, until at last the water closed over them all. And from that day to this, Siosi, nothing has ever been seen of Ta'a, nor of Sina, nor of the devil's white man.'



## W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

(B. 1874)

### RED

THE skipper thrust his hand into one of his trousers pockets and with difficulty, for they were not at the sides but in front and he was a portly man, pulled out a large silver watch. He looked at it and then looked again at the declining sun. The Kanaka at the wheel gave him a glance, but did not speak. The skipper's eyes rested on the island they were approaching. A white line of foam marked the reef. He knew there was an opening large enough to get his ship through, and when they came a little nearer he counted on seeing it. They had nearly an hour of daylight still before them. In the lagoon the water was deep and they could anchor comfortably. The chief of the village which he could already see among the coco-nut trees was a friend of the mate's, and it would be pleasant to go ashore for the night. The mate came forward at that minute and the skipper turned to him.

'We'll take a bottle of booze along with us and get some girls in to dance,' he said.

'I don't see the opening,' said the mate.

He was a Kanaka, a handsome, swarthy fellow, with somewhat the look of a later Roman emperor, inclined to stoutness; but his face was fine and clean-cut.

'I'm dead sure there's one right here,' said the captain, looking through his glasses. 'I can't understand why I can't pick it up. Send one of the boys up the mast to have a look.'

The mate called one of the crew and gave him

the order. The captain watched the Kanaka climb and waited for him to speak. But the Kanaka shouted down that he could see nothing but the unbroken line of foam. The captain spoke Samoan like a native, and he cursed him freely.

‘ Shall he stay up there? ’ asked the mate.

‘ What the hell good does that do? ’ answered the captain. ‘ The blame fool can’t see worth a cent. You bet your sweet life I’d find the opening if I was up there.’

He looked at the slender mast with anger. It was all very well for a native who had been used to climbing up coco-nut trees all his life. He was fat and heavy.

‘ Come down,’ he shouted. ‘ You’re no more use than a dead dog. We’ll just have to go along the reef till we find the opening.’

It was a seventy-ton schooner with paraffin auxiliary, and it ran, when there was no head wind, between four and five knots an hour. It was a bedraggled object; it had been painted white a very long time ago, but it was now dirty, dingy, and mottled. It smelt strongly of paraffin and of the copra which was its usual cargo. They were within a hundred feet of the reef now and the captain told the steersman to run along it till they came to the opening. But when they had gone a couple of miles he realized that they had missed it. He went about and slowly worked back again. The white foam of the reef continued without interruption and now the sun was setting. With a curse at the stupidity of the crew the skipper resigned himself to waiting till next morning.

‘ Put her about,’ he said. ‘ I can’t anchor here.’

They went out to sea a little and presently it was quite dark. They anchored. When the sail was furled the ship began to roll a good deal. They said in Apia that one day she would roll right over;

and the owner, a German-American who managed one of the largest stores, said that no money was big enough to induce him to go out in her. The cook, a Chinese in white trousers, very dirty and ragged, and a thin white tunic, came to say that supper was ready, and when the skipper went into the cabin he found the engineer already seated at table. The engineer was a long, lean man with a scraggy neck. He was dressed in blue overalls and a sleeveless jersey which showed his thin arms tattooed from elbow to wrist.

'Hell, having to spend the night outside,' said the skipper.

The engineer did not answer, and they ate their supper in silence. The cabin was lit by a dim oil lamp. When they had eaten the canned apricots with which the meal finished the Chink brought them a cup of tea. The skipper lit a cigar and went on the upper deck. The island now was only a darker mass against the night. The stars were very bright. The only sound was the ceaseless breaking of the surf. The skipper sank into a deck-chair and smoked idly. Presently three or four members of the crew came up and sat down. One of them had a banjo and another a concertina. They began to play, and one of them sang. The native song sounded strange on these instruments. Then to the singing a couple began to dance. It was a barbaric dance, savage and primeval, rapid, with quick movements of the hands and feet and contortions of the body; it was sensual, sexual even, but sexual without passion. It was very animal, direct, weird without mystery, natural in short, and one might almost say childlike. At last they grew tired. They stretched themselves on the deck and slept, and all was silent. The skipper lifted himself heavily out of his chair and clambered down the companion. He went into his cabin and got out of his clothes.

He climbed into his bunk and lay there. He panted a little in the heat of the night.

But next morning, when the dawn crept over the tranquil sea, the opening in the reef which had eluded them the night before was seen a little to the east of where they lay. The schooner entered the lagoon. There was not a ripple on the surface of the water. Deep down among the coral rocks you saw little coloured fish swim. When he had anchored his ship the skipper ate his breakfast and went on deck. The sun shone from an unclouded sky, but in the early morning the air was grateful and cool. It was Sunday, and there was a feeling of quietness, a silence as though nature were at rest, which gave him a peculiar sense of comfort. He sat, looking at the wooded coast, and felt lazy and well at ease. Presently a slow smile moved his lips and he threw the stump of his cigar into the water.

‘I guess I’ll go ashore,’ he said. ‘Get the boat out.’

He climbed stiffly down the ladder and was rowed to a little cove. The coco-nut trees came down to the water’s edge, not in rows, but spaced out with an ordered formality. They were like a ballet of spinsters, elderly but flippant, standing in affected attitudes with the simpering graces of a bygone age. He sauntered idly through them, along a path that could be just seen winding its tortuous way, and it led him presently to a broad creek. There was a bridge across it, but a bridge constructed of single trunks of coco-nut trees, a dozen of them, placed end to end and supported where they met by a forked branch driven into the bed of the creek. You walked on a smooth, round surface, narrow and slippery, and there was no support for the hand. To cross such a bridge required sure feet and a stout heart. The skipper hesitated. But he saw on the other side, nestling among the

trees, a white man's house; he made up his mind and, rather gingerly, began to walk. He watched his feet carefully, and where one trunk joined on to the next and there was a difference of level, he tottered a little. It was with a gasp of relief that he reached the last tree and finally set his feet on the firm ground of the other side. He had been so intent on the difficult crossing that he never noticed any one was watching him, and it was with surprise that he heard himself spoken to.

‘It takes a bit of nerve to cross these bridges when you’re not used to them.’

He looked up and saw a man standing in front of him. He had evidently come out of the house which he had seen.

‘I saw you hesitate,’ the man continued, with a smile on his lips, ‘and I was watching to see you fall in.’

‘Not on your life,’ said the captain, who had now recovered his confidence.

‘I’ve fallen in myself before now. I remember, one evening I came back from shooting, and I fell in, gun and all. Now I get a boy to carry my gun for me.’

He was a man no longer young, with a small beard, now somewhat grey, and a thin face. He was dressed in a singlet, without arms, and a pair of duck trousers. He wore neither shoes nor socks. He spoke English with a slight accent.

‘Are you Neilson?’ asked the skipper.

‘I am.’

‘I’ve heard about you. I thought you lived somewhere round here.’

The skipper followed his host into the little bungalow and sat down heavily in the chair which the other motioned him to take. While Neilson went out to fetch whisky and glasses he took a look round the room. It filled him with amazement.

He had never seen so many books. The shelves reached from floor to ceiling on all four walls, and they were closely packed. There was a grand piano littered with music, and a large table on which books and magazines lay in disorder. The room made him feel embarrassed. He remembered that Neilson was a queer fellow. No one knew very much about him, although he had been in the islands for so many years, but those who knew him agreed that he was queer. He was a Swede.

'You've got one big heap of books here,' he said, when Neilson returned.

'They do no harm,' answered Neilson with a smile.

'Have you read them all?' asked the skipper.

'Most of them.'

'I'm a bit of a reader myself. I have the *Saturday Evening Post* sent me regler.'

Neilson poured his visitor a good stiff glass of whisky and gave him a cigar. The skipper volunteered a little information.

'I got in last night, but I couldn't find the opening, so I had to anchor outside. I never been this run before, but my people had some stuff they wanted to bring over here. Gray, d'you know him?'

'Yes, he's got a store a little way along.'

'Well, there was a lot of canned stuff that he wanted over, an' he's got some copra. They thought I might just as well come over as lie idle at Apia. I run between Apia and Pago-Pago mostly, but they've got small-pox there just now, and there's nothing stirring.'

He took a drink of his whisky and lit a cigar. He was a taciturn man, but there was something in Neilson that made him nervous, and his nervousness made him talk. The Swede was looking at him with large dark eyes in which there was an expression of faint amusement.

‘This is a tidy little place you’ve got here.’

‘I’ve done my best with it.’

‘You must do pretty well with your trees. They look fine. With copra at the price it is now. I had a bit of a plantation myself once, in Upolu it was, but I had to sell it.’

He looked round the room again, where all those books gave him a feeling of something incomprehensible and hostile.

‘I guess you must find it a bit lonesome here though,’ he said.

‘I’ve got used to it. I’ve been here for twenty-five years.’

Now the captain could think of nothing more to say, and he smoked in silence. Neilson had apparently no wish to break it. He looked at his guest with a meditative eye. He was a tall man, more than six feet high, and very stout. His face was red and blotchy, with a network of little purple veins on the cheeks, and his features were sunk into its fatness. His eyes were bloodshot. His neck was buried in rolls of fat. But for a fringe of long curly hair, nearly white, at the back of his head, he was quite bald; and that immense, shiny surface of forehead, which might have given him a false look of intelligence, on the contrary gave him one of peculiar imbecility. He wore a blue flannel shirt, open at the neck and showing his fat chest covered with a mat of reddish hair, and a very old pair of blue serge trousers. He sat in his chair in a heavy ungainly attitude, his great belly thrust forward and his fat legs uncrossed. All elasticity had gone from his limbs. Neilson wondered idly what sort of man he had been in his youth. It was almost impossible to imagine that this creature of vast bulk had ever been a boy who ran about. The skipper finished his whisky, and Neilson pushed the bottle towards him.

‘Help yourself.’

The skipper leaned forward and with his great hand seized it.

‘And how come you in these parts anyways?’ he said.

‘Oh, I came out to the islands for my health. My lungs were bad and they said I hadn’t a year to live. You see they were wrong.’

‘I meant, how come you to settle down right here?’

‘I am a sentimentalist.’

‘Oh!’

Neilson knew that the skipper had not an idea what he meant, and he looked at him with an ironical twinkle in his dark eyes. Perhaps just because the skipper was so gross and dull a man the whim seized him to talk further.

‘You were too busy keeping your balance to notice, when you crossed the bridge, but this spot is generally considered rather pretty.’

‘It’s a cute little house you’ve got here.’

‘Ah, that wasn’t here when I first came. There was a native hut, with its beehive roof and its pillars, overshadowed by a great tree with red flowers; and the croton bushes, their leaves yellow and red and golden, made a pied fence around it. And then all about were the coco-nut trees, as fanciful as women, and as vain. They stood at the water’s edge and spent all day looking at their reflections. I was a young man then—Good Heavens, it’s a quarter of a century ago—and I wanted to enjoy all the loveliness of the world in the short time allotted to me before I passed into the darkness. I thought it was the most beautiful spot I had ever seen. The first time I saw it I had a catch at my heart, and I was afraid I was going to cry. I wasn’t more than twenty-five, and though I put the best face I could on it, I didn’t want to die. And somehow it seemed to me that the very beauty of this



place made it easier for me to accept my fate. I felt when I came here that all my past life had fallen away, Stockholm and its University, and then Bonn: it all seemed the life of somebody else, as though now at last I had achieved the reality which our doctors of philosophy—I am one myself, you know—had discussed so much. “A year,” I cried to myself. “I have a year. I will spend it here and then I am content to die.”

‘We are foolish and sentimental and melodramatic at twenty-five, but if we weren’t perhaps we should be less wise at fifty.’

‘Now drink, my friend. Don’t let the nonsense I talk interfere with you.’

He waved his thin hand towards the bottle, and the skipper finished what remained in his glass.

‘You ain’t drinking nothin’,’ he said, reaching for the whisky.

‘I am of a sober habit,’ smiled the Swede. ‘I intoxicate myself in ways which I fancy are more subtle. But perhaps that is only vanity. Anyhow, the effects are more lasting and the results less deleterious.’

‘They say there’s a deal of cocaine taken in the States now,’ said the captain.

Neilson chuckled.

‘But I do not see a white man often,’ he continued, ‘and for once I don’t think a drop of whisky can do me any harm.’

He poured himself out a little, added some soda, and took a sip.

‘And presently I found out why the spot had such an unearthly loveliness. Here love had tarried for a moment like a migrant bird that happens on a ship in mid-ocean and for a little while folds its tired wings. The fragrance of a beautiful passion hovered over it like the fragrance of hawthorn in May in the meadows of my home. It seems to me

that the places where men have loved or suffered keep about them always some faint aroma of something that has not wholly died. It is as though they had acquired a spiritual significance which mysteriously affects those who pass. I wish I could make myself clear.' He smiled a little. 'Though I cannot imagine that if I did you would understand.'

He paused.

'I think this place was beautiful because here I had been loved beautifully.' And now he shrugged his shoulders. 'But perhaps it is only that my aesthetic sense is gratified by the happy conjunction of young love and a suitable setting.'

Even a man less thick-witted than the skipper might have been forgiven if he were bewildered by Neilson's words. For he seemed faintly to laugh at what he said. It was as though he spoke from emotion which his intellect found ridiculous. He had said himself that he was a sentimentalist, and when sentimentality is joined with scepticism there is often the devil to pay.

He was silent for an instant and looked at the captain with eyes in which there was a sudden perplexity.

'You know, I can't help thinking that I've seen you before somewhere or other,' he said.

'I couldn't say as I remember you,' returned the skipper.

'I have a curious feeling as though your face were familiar to me. It's been puzzling me for some time. But I can't situate my recollection in any place or at any time.'

The skipper massively shrugged his heavy shoulders.

'It's thirty years since I first come to the islands. A man can't figure on remembering all the folk he meets in a while like that.'

The Swede shook his head.

‘ You know how one sometimes has the feeling that a place one has never been to before is strangely familiar. That ’s how I seem to see you.’ He gave a whimsical smile. ‘ Perhaps I knew you in some past existence. Perhaps, perhaps you were the master of a galley in ancient Rome and I was a slave at the oar. Thirty years have you been here? ’

‘ Every bit of thirty years.’

‘ I wonder if you knew a man called Red? ’

‘ Red? ’

‘ That is the only name I’ve ever known him by. I never knew him personally. I never even set eyes on him. And yet I seem to see him more clearly than many men, my brothers, for instance, with whom I passed my daily life for many years. He lives in my imagination with the distinctness of a Paolo Malatesta or a Romeo. But I daresay you have never read Dante or Shakespeare? ’

‘ I can’t say as I have,’ said the captain.

Neilson, smoking a cigar, leaned back in his chair and looked vacantly at the ring of smoke which floated in the still air. A smile played on his lips, but his eyes were grave. Then he looked at the captain. There was in his gross obesity something extraordinarily repellent. He had the plethoric self-satisfaction of the very fat. It was an outrage. It set Neilson’s nerves on edge. But the contrast between the man before him and the man he had in mind was pleasant.

‘ It appears that Red was the most comely thing you ever saw. I’ve talked to quite a number of people who knew him in those days, white men, and they all agree that the first time you saw him his beauty just took your breath away. They called him Red on account of his flaming hair. It had a natural wave and he wore it long. It must have been of that wonderful colour that the pre-Raphaelites raved over. I don’t think he was vain of it, he

was much too ingenuous for that, but no one could have blamed him if he had been. He was tall, six feet and an inch or two—in the native house that used to stand here was the mark of his height cut with a knife on the central trunk that supported the roof—and he was made like a Greek god, broad in the shoulders and thin in the flanks; he was like Apollo, with just that soft roundness which Praxiteles gave him, and that suave, feminine grace which has in it something troubling and mysterious. His skin was dazzling white, milky, like satin; his skin was like a woman's.'

'I had kind of a white skin myself when I was a kiddie,' said the skipper, with a twinkle in his bloodshot eyes.

But Neilson paid no attention to him. He was telling his story now and interruption made him impatient.

'And his face was just as beautiful as his body. He had large blue eyes, very dark, so that some say they were black, and unlike most red-haired people he had dark eyebrows and long dark lashes. His features were perfectly regular and his mouth was like a scarlet wound. He was twenty.'

On these words the Swede stopped with a certain sense of the dramatic. He took a sip of whisky.

'He was unique. There never was any one more beautiful. There was no more reason for him than for a wonderful blossom to flower on a wild plant. He was a happy accident of nature.'

'One day he landed at that cove into which you must have put this morning. He was an American sailor, and he had deserted from a man-of-war in Apia. He had induced some good-humoured native to give him a passage on a cutter that happened to be sailing from Apia to Safoto, and he had been put ashore here in a dug-out. I do not know why he deserted. Perhaps life on a man-of-war with its

restrictions irked him, perhaps he was in trouble, and perhaps it was the South Seas and these romantic islands that got into his bones. Every now and then they take a man strangely, and he finds himself like a fly in a spider's web. It may be that there was a softness of fibre in him, and these green hills with their soft airs, this blue sea, took the northern strength from him as Delilah took the Nazarite's. Anyhow, he wanted to hide himself, and he thought he would be safe in this secluded nook till his ship had sailed from Samoa.

'There was a native hut at the cove and as he stood there, wondering where exactly he should turn his steps, a young girl came out and invited him to enter. He knew scarcely two words of the native tongue and she a little English. But he understood well enough what her smiles meant, and her pretty gestures, and he followed her. He sat down on a mat and she gave him slices of pine-apple to eat. I can speak of Red only from hearsay, but I saw the girl three years after he first met her, and she was scarcely nineteen then. You cannot imagine how exquisite she was. She had the passionate grace of the hibiscus and the rich colour. She was rather tall, slim, with the delicate features of her race, and large eyes like pools of still water under the palm trees; her hair, black and curling, fell down her back, and she wore a wreath of scented flowers. Her hands were lovely. They were so small, so exquisitely formed, they gave your heart-strings a wrench. And in those days she laughed easily. Her smile was so delightful that it made your knees shake. Her skin was like a field of ripe corn on a summer day. Good Heavens, how can I describe her? She was too beautiful to be real.

'And these two young things, she was sixteen and he was twenty, fell in love with one another at first sight. That is the real love, not the love that comes

from sympathy, common interests, or intellectual community, but love pure and simple. That is the love that Adam felt for Eve when he awoke and found her in the garden gazing at him with dewy eyes. That is the love that draws the beasts to one another, and the Gods. That is the love that makes the world a miracle. That is the love which gives life its pregnant meaning. You have never heard of the wise, cynical French duke who said that with two lovers there is always one who loves and one who lets himself be loved; it is a bitter truth to which most of us have to resign ourselves; but now and then there are two who love and two who let themselves be loved. Then one might fancy that the sun stands still as it stood when Joshua prayed to the God of Israel.

‘And even now after all these years, when I think of these two, so young, so fair, so simple, and of their love, I feel a pang. It tears my heart just as my heart is torn when on certain nights I watch the full moon shining on the lagoon from an unclouded sky. There is always pain in the contemplation of perfect beauty.

‘They were children. She was good and sweet and kind. I know nothing of him, and I like to think that then at all events he was ingenuous and frank. I like to think that his soul was as comely as his body. But I daresay he had no more soul than the creatures of the woods and forests who made pipes from reeds and bathed in the mountain streams when the world was young, and you might catch sight of little fauns galloping through the glade on the back of a bearded centaur. A soul is a troublesome possession and when man developed it he lost the Garden of Eden.

‘Well, when Red came to the island it had recently been visited by one of those epidemics which the white man has brought to the South Seas, and

one-third of the inhabitants had died. It seems that the girl had lost all her near kin and she lived now in the house of distant cousins. The household consisted of two ancient crones, bowed and wrinkled, two younger women, and a man and a boy. For a few days he stayed there. But perhaps he felt himself too near the shore, with the possibility that he might fall in with white men who would reveal his hiding-place; perhaps the lovers could not bear that the company of others should rob them for an instant of the delight of being together. One morning they set out, the pair of them, with the few things that belonged to the girl, and walked along a grassy path under the coco-nuts, till they came to the creek you see. They had to cross the bridge you crossed, and the girl laughed gleefully because he was afraid. She held his hand till they came to the end of the first tree, and then his courage failed him and he had to go back. He was obliged to take off all his clothes before he could risk it, and she carried them over for him on her head. They settled down in the empty hut that stood here. Whether she had any rights over it (land tenure is a complicated business in the islands), or whether the owner had died during the epidemic, I do not know, but anyhow no one questioned them, and they took possession. Their furniture consisted of a couple of grass mats on which they slept, a fragment of looking-glass, and a bowl or two. In this pleasant land that is enough to start housekeeping on.

‘They say that happy people have no history, and certainly a happy love has none. They did nothing all day long and yet the days seemed all too short. The girl had a native name, but Red called her Sally. He picked up the easy language very quickly, and he used to lie on the mat for hours while she chattered gaily to him. He was a silent fellow, and perhaps his mind was lethargic. He smoked

incessantly the cigarettes which she made him out of the native tobacco and pandanus leaf, and he watched her while with deft fingers she made grass mats. Often natives would come in and tell long stories of the old days when the island was disturbed by tribal wars. Sometimes he would go fishing on the reef, and bring home a basketful of coloured fish. Sometimes at night he would go out with a lantern to catch lobster. There were plantains round the hut and Sally would roast them for their frugal meal. She knew how to make delicious messes from coco-nuts, and the bread-fruit tree by the side of the creek gave them its fruit. On feast-days they killed a little pig and cooked it on hot stones. They bathed together in the creek; and in the evening they went down to the lagoon and paddled about in a dug-out, with its great outrigger. The sea was deep blue, wine-coloured at sundown, like the sea of Homeric Greece; but in the lagoon the colour had an infinite variety, aquamarine and amethyst and emerald; and the setting sun turned it for a short moment to liquid gold. Then there was the colour of the coral, brown, white, pink, red, purple; and the shapes it took were marvellous. It was like a magic garden, and the hurrying fish were like butterflies. It strangely lacked reality. Among the coral were pools with a floor of white sand and here, where the water was dazzling clear, it was very good to bathe. Then, cool and happy, they wandered back in the gloaming over the soft grass road to the creek, walking hand in hand, and now the mynah birds filled the coco-nut trees with their clamour. And then the night, with that great sky shining with gold, that seemed to stretch more widely than the skies of Europe, and the soft airs that blew gently through the open hut, the long night again was all too short. She was sixteen and he was barely twenty. The dawn crept in among



the wooden pillars of the hut and looked at those lovely children sleeping in one another's arms. The sun hid behind the great tattered leaves of the plantains so that it might not disturb them, and then, with playful malice, shot a golden ray, like the outstretched paw of a Persian cat, on their faces. They opened their sleepy eyes and they smiled to welcome another day. The weeks lengthened into months, and a year passed. They seemed to love one another as—I hesitate to say passionately, for passion has in it always a shade of sadness, a touch of bitterness or anguish, but as whole-heartedly, as simply and naturally as on that first day on which, meeting, they had recognized that a god was in them.

‘If you had asked them I have no doubt that they would have thought it impossible to suppose their love could ever cease. Do we not know that the essential element of love is a belief in its own eternity? And yet perhaps in Red there was already a very little seed, unknown to himself and unsuspected by the girl, which would in time have grown to weariness. For one day one of the natives from the cove told them that some way down the coast at the anchorage was a British whaling-ship.

“Gee,” he said, “I wonder if I could make a trade of some nuts and plantains for a pound or two of tobacco.”

‘The pandanus cigarettes that Sally made him with untiring hands were strong and pleasant enough to smoke, but they left him unsatisfied; and he yearned on a sudden for real tobacco, hard, rank, and pungent. He had not smoked a pipe for many months. His mouth watered at the thought of it. One would have thought some premonition of harm would have made Sally seek to dissuade him, but love possessed her so completely that it never occurred to her any power on earth could take him

from her. They went up into the hills together and gathered a great basket of wild oranges, green, but sweet and juicy; and they picked plantains from around the hut, and coco-nuts from their trees, and bread-fruit and mangoes; and they carried them down to the cove. They loaded the unstable canoe with them, and Red and the native boy who had brought them the news of the ship paddled along outside the reef.

‘It was the last time she ever saw him.

‘Next day the boy came back alone. He was all in tears. This is the story he told. When after their long paddle they reached the ship and Red hailed it, a white man looked over the side and told them to come on board. They took the fruit they had brought with them and Red piled it up on the deck. The white man and he began to talk, and they seemed to come to some agreement. One of them went below and brought up tobacco. Red took some at once and lit a pipe. The boy imitated the zest with which he blew a great cloud of smoke from his mouth. Then they said something to him and he went into the cabin. Through the open door the boy, watching curiously, saw a bottle brought out and glasses. Red drank and smoked. They seemed to ask him something, for he shook his head and laughed. The man, the first man who had spoken to them, laughed too, and he filled Red’s glass once more. They went on talking and drinking, and presently, growing tired of watching a sight that meant nothing to him, the boy curled himself up on the deck and slept. He was awakened by a kick; and, jumping to his feet, he saw that the ship was slowly sailing out of the lagoon. He caught sight of Red seated at the table, with his head resting heavily on his arms, fast asleep. He made a movement towards him, intending to wake him, but a rough hand seized his arm, and a man, with a

scowl and words which he did not understand, pointed to the side. He shouted to Red, but in a moment he was seized and flung overboard. Helpless, he swam round to his canoe which was drifting a little way off, and pushed it on to the reef. He climbed in and, sobbing all the way, paddled back to shore.

‘What had happened was obvious enough. The whaler, by desertion or sickness, was short of hands, and the captain when Red came aboard had asked him to sign on; on his refusal he had made him drunk and kidnapped him.

‘Sally was beside herself with grief. For three days she screamed and cried. The natives did what they could to comfort her, but she would not be comforted. She would not eat. And then, exhausted, she sank into a sullen apathy. She spent long days at the cove, watching the lagoon, in the vain hope that Red somehow or other would manage to escape. She sat on the white sand, hour after hour, with the tears running down her cheeks, and at night dragged herself wearily back across the creek to the little hut where she had been happy. The people with whom she had lived before Red came to the island wished her to return to them, but she would not; she was convinced that Red would come back, and she wanted him to find her where he had left her. Four months later she was delivered of a still-born child, and the old woman who had come to help her through her confinement remained with her in the hut. All joy was taken from her life. If her anguish with time became less intolerable it was replaced by a settled melancholy. You would not have thought that among these people, whose emotions, though so violent, are very transient, a woman could be found capable of so enduring a passion. She never lost the profound conviction that sooner or later Red would come back.

She watched for him, and every time some one crossed this slender little bridge of coco-nut trees she looked. It might at last be he.'

Neilson stopped talking and gave a faint sigh.

'And what happened to her in the end?' asked the skipper.

Neilson smiled bitterly.

'Oh, three years afterwards she took up with another white man.'

The skipper gave a fat, cynical chuckle.

'That's generally what happens to them,' he said.

The Swede shot him a look of hatred. He did not know why that gross, obese man excited in him so violent a repulsion. But his thoughts wandered and he found his mind filled with memories of the past. He went back five-and-twenty years. It was when he first came to the island, weary of Apia, with its heavy drinking, its gambling and coarse sensuality, a sick man, trying to resign himself to the loss of the career which had fired his imagination with ambitious thoughts. He set behind him resolutely all his hopes of making a great name for himself and strove to content himself with the few poor months of careful life which was all that he could count on. He was boarding with a half-caste trader who had a store a couple of miles along the coast at the edge of a native village; and one day, wandering aimlessly along the grassy paths of the coco-nut groves, he had come upon the hut in which Sally lived. The beauty of the spot had filled him with a rapture so great that it was almost painful, and then he had seen Sally. She was the loveliest creature he had ever seen, and the sadness in those dark, magnificent eyes of hers affected him strangely. The Kanakas were a handsome race, and beauty was not rare among them, but it was the beauty of shapely animals. It was empty. But those tragic

eyes were dark with mystery, and you felt in them the bitter complexity of the groping, human soul. The trader told him the story and it moved him.

‘Do you think he’ll ever come back?’ asked Neilson.

‘No fear. Why, it’ll be a couple of years before the ship is paid off, and by then he’ll have forgotten all about her. I bet he was pretty mad when he woke up and found he’d been shanghaied, and I shouldn’t wonder but he wanted to fight somebody. But he’d got to grin and bear it, and I guess in a month he was thinking it the best thing that had ever happened to him that he got away from the island.’

But Neilson could not get the story out of his head. Perhaps because he was sick and weakly, the radiant health of Red appealed to his imagination. Himself an ugly man, insignificant of appearance, he prized very highly comeliness in others. He had never been passionately in love, and certainly he had never been passionately loved. The mutual attraction of those two young things gave him a singular delight. It had the ineffable beauty of the Absolute. He went again to the little hut by the creek. He had a gift for languages and an energetic mind, accustomed to work, and he had already given much time to the study of the local tongue. Old habit was strong in him and he was gathering together material for a paper on the Samoan speech. The old crone who shared the hut with Sally invited him to come in and sit down. She gave him *kava* to drink and cigarettes to smoke. She was glad to have some one to chat with and while she talked he looked at Sally. She reminded him of the Psyche in the museum at Naples. Her features had the same clear purity of line, and though she had borne a child she had still a virginal aspect.

It was not till he had seen her two or three times

that he induced her to speak. Then it was only to ask him if he had seen in Apia a man called Red. Two years had passed since his disappearance, but it was plain that she still thought of him incessantly.

It did not take Neilson long to discover that he was in love with her. It was only by an effort of will now that he prevented himself from going every day to the creek, and when he was not with Sally his thoughts were. At first, looking upon himself as a dying man, he asked only to look at her, and occasionally hear her speak, and his love gave him a wonderful happiness. He exulted in its purity. He wanted nothing from her but the opportunity to weave around her graceful person a web of beautiful fancies. But the open air, the equable temperature, the rest, the simple fare, began to have an unexpected effect on his health. His temperature did not soar at night to such alarming heights, he coughed less and began to put on weight; six months passed without his having a haemorrhage; and on a sudden he saw the possibility that he might live. He had studied his disease carefully, and the hope dawned upon him that with great care he might arrest its course. It exhilarated him to look forward once more to the future. He made plans. It was evident that any active life was out of the question, but he could live on the islands, and the small income he had, insufficient elsewhere, would be ample to keep him. He could grow coco-nuts; that would give him an occupation; and he would send for his books and a piano; but his quick mind saw that in all this he was merely trying to conceal from himself the desire which obsessed him.

He wanted Sally. He loved not only her beauty, but that dim soul which he divined behind her suffering eyes. He would intoxicate her with his passion. In the end he would make her forget. And in an ecstasy of surrender he fancied himself giving

her too the happiness which he had thought never to know again, but had now so miraculously achieved.

He asked her to live with him. She refused. He had expected that and did not let it depress him, for he was sure that sooner or later she would yield. His love was irresistible. He told the old woman of his wishes, and found somewhat to his surprise that she and the neighbours, long aware of them, were strongly urging Sally to accept his offer. After all, every native was glad to keep house for a white man, and Neilson according to the standards of the island was a rich one. The trader with whom he boarded went to her and told her not to be a fool; such an opportunity would not come again, and after so long she could not still believe that Red would ever return. The girl's resistance only increased Neilson's desire, and what had been a very pure love now became an agonizing passion. He was determined that nothing should stand in his way. He gave Sally no peace. At last, worn out by his persistence and the persuasions, by turns pleading and angry, of every one around her, she consented. But the day after when, exultant, he went to see her he found that in the night she had burnt down the hut in which she and Red had lived together. The old crone ran towards him full of angry abuse of Sally, but he waved her aside; it did not matter; they would build a bungalow on the place where the hut had stood. A European house would really be more convenient if he wanted to bring out a piano and a vast number of books.

And so the little wooden house was built in which he had now lived for many years, and Sally became his wife. But after the first few weeks of rapture, during which he was satisfied with what she gave him, he had known little happiness. She had yielded to him, through weariness, but she had only yielded

what she set no store on. The soul which he had dimly glimpsed escaped him. He knew that she cared nothing for him. She still loved Red, and all the time she was waiting for his return. At a sign from him, Neilson knew that, notwithstanding his love, his tenderness, his sympathy, his generosity, she would leave him without a moment's hesitation. She would never give a thought to his distress. Anguish seized him and he battered at that impenetrable self of hers which sullenly resisted him. His love became bitter. He tried to melt her heart with kindness, but it remained as hard as before; he feigned indifference, but she did not notice it. Sometimes he lost his temper and abused her, and then she wept silently. Sometimes he thought she was nothing but a fraud, and that soul simply an invention of his own, and that he could not get into the sanctuary of her heart because there was no sanctuary there. His love became a prison from which he longed to escape, but he had not the strength merely to open the door—that was all it needed—and walk out into the open air. It was torture and at last he became numb and hopeless. In the end the fire burnt itself out and, when he saw her eyes rest for an instant on the slender bridge, it was no longer rage that filled his heart but impatience. For many years now they had lived together bound by the ties of habit and convenience, and it was with a smile that he looked back on his old passion. She was an old woman, for the women on the islands age quickly, and if he had no love for her any more he had tolerance. She left him alone. He was contented with his piano and his books.

His thoughts led him to a desire for words.

‘When I look back now and reflect on that brief passionate love of Red and Sally, I think that perhaps they should thank the ruthless fate that separ-



ated them when their love seemed still to be at its height. They suffered, but they suffered in beauty. They were spared the real tragedy of love.'

'I don't know exactly as I get you,' said the skipper.

'The tragedy of love is not death or separation. How long do you think it would have been before one or other of them ceased to care? Oh, it is dreadfully bitter to look at a woman whom you have loved with all your heart and soul, so that you felt you could not bear to let her out of your sight, and realize that you would not mind if you never saw her again. The tragedy of love is indifference.'

But while he was speaking a very extraordinary thing happened. Though he had been addressing the skipper he had not been talking to him, he had been putting his thoughts into words for himself, and with his eyes fixed on the man in front of him he had not seen him. But now an image presented itself to them, an image not of the man he saw, but of another man. It was as though he were looking into one of those distorting mirrors that make you extraordinarily squat or outrageously elongate, but here exactly the opposite took place, and in the obese, ugly old man he caught the shadowy glimpse of a stripling. He gave him now a quick, searching scrutiny. Why had a haphazard stroll brought him just to this place? A sudden tremor of his heart made him slightly breathless. An absurd suspicion seized him. What had occurred to him was impossible, and yet it might be a fact.

'What is your name?' he asked abruptly.

The skipper's face puckered and he gave a cunning chuckle. He looked then malicious and horribly vulgar.

'It's such a damned long time since I heard it that I almost forget it myself. But for thirty years now in the islands they've always called me Red.'

His huge form shook as he gave a low, almost silent laugh. It was obscene. Neilson shuddered. Red was hugely amused, and from his bloodshot eyes tears ran down his cheeks.

Neilson gave a gasp, for at that moment a woman came in. She was a native, a woman of somewhat commanding presence, stout without being corpulent, dark, for the natives grow darker with age, with very grey hair. She wore a black Mother Hubbard, and its thinness showed her heavy breasts. The moment had come.

She made an observation to Neilson about some household matter and he answered. He wondered if his voice sounded as unnatural to her as it did to himself. She gave the man who was sitting in the chair by the window an indifferent glance, and went out of the room. The moment had come and gone.

Neilson for a moment could not speak. He was strangely shaken. Then he said:

‘I’d be very glad if you’d stay and have a bit of dinner with me. Pot luck.’

‘I don’t think I will,’ said Red. ‘I must go after this fellow Gray. I’ll give him his stuff and then I’ll get away. I want to be back in Apia tomorrow.’

‘I’ll send a boy along with you to show you the way.’

‘That’ll be fine.’

Red heaved himself out of his chair, while the Swede called one of the boys who worked on the plantation. He told him where the skipper wanted to go, and the boy stepped along the bridge. Red prepared to follow him.

‘Don’t fall in,’ said Neilson.

‘Not on your life.’

Neilson watched him make his way across and when he had disappeared among the coco-nuts he

looked still. Then he sank heavily in his chair. Was that the man who had prevented him from being happy? Was that the man whom Sally had loved all these years and for whom she had waited so desperately? It was grotesque. A sudden fury seized him so that he had an instinct to spring up and smash everything around him. He had been cheated. They had seen each other at last and had not known it. He began to laugh, mirthlessly, and his laughter grew till it became hysterical. The Gods had played him a cruel trick. And he was old now.

At last Sally came in to tell him dinner was ready. He sat down in front of her and tried to eat. He wondered what she would say if he told her now that the fat old man sitting in the chair was the lover whom she remembered still with the passionate abandonment of her youth. Years ago, when he hated her because she made him so unhappy, he would have been glad to tell her. He wanted to hurt her then as she hurt him, because his hatred was only love. But now he did not care. He shrugged his shoulders listlessly.

‘What did that man want?’ she asked presently.

He did not answer at once. She was old too, a fat old native woman. He wondered why he had ever loved her so madly. He had laid at her feet all the treasures of his soul, and she had cared nothing for them. Waste, what waste! And now, when he looked at her, he felt only contempt. His patience was at last exhausted. He answered her question.

‘He’s the captain of a schooner. He’s come from Apia.’

‘Yes.’

‘He brought me news from home. My eldest brother is very ill and I must go back.’

‘Will you be gone long?’

He shrugged his shoulders.

# JACK LONDON

1876-1916

## THE SEED OF McCOY

THE *Pyrenees*, her iron sides pressed low in the water by her cargo of wheat, rolled sluggishly, and made it easy for the man who was climbing aboard from out a tiny outrigger canoe. As his eyes came level with the rail, so that he could see inboard, it seemed to him that he saw a dim, almost indiscernible haze. It was more like an illusion, like a blurring film that had spread abruptly over his eyes. He felt an inclination to brush it away, and the same instant he thought that he was growing old and that it was time to send to San Francisco for a pair of spectacles.

As he came over the rail he cast a glance aloft at the tall masts, and, next, at the pumps. They were not working. There seemed nothing the matter with the big ship, and he wondered why she had hoisted the signal of distress. He thought of his happy islanders, and hoped it was not disease. Perhaps the ship was short of water or provisions. He shook hands with the captain whose gaunt face and careworn eyes made no secret of the trouble, whatever it was. At the same moment the newcomer was aware of a faint indefinable smell. It seemed like that of burnt bread, but different.

He glanced curiously about him. Twenty feet away a weary-faced sailor was caulking the deck. As his eye lingered on the man, he saw suddenly arise from under his hands a faint spiral of haze that curled and twisted and was gone. By now he had reached the deck. His bare feet were pervaded

by a dull warmth that quickly penetrated the thick calluses. He knew now the nature of the ship's distress. His eyes roved swiftly forward, where the full crew of weary-faced sailors regarded him eagerly. The glance from his liquid brown eyes swept over them like a benediction, soothing them, wrapping them about as in the mantle of a great peace.

'How long has she been afire, Captain?' he asked in a voice so gentle and unperturbed that it was as the cooing of a dove.

At first the captain felt the peace and content of it stealing in upon him; then the consciousness of all that he had gone through and was going through smote him, and he was resentful. By what right did this ragged beachcomber, in dungaree trousers and a cotton shirt, suggest such a thing as peace and content to him and his overwrought, exhausted soul? The captain did not reason this; it was the unconscious process of emotion that caused his resentment.

'Fifteen days,' he answered shortly. 'Who are you?'

'My name is McCoy,' came the answer in tones that breathed tenderness and compassion.

'I mean, are you the pilot?'

McCoy passed the benediction of his gaze over the tall, heavy-shouldered man with the haggard, unshaven face who had joined the captain.

'I am as much a pilot as anybody,' was McCoy's answer. 'We are all pilots here, Captain, and I know every inch of these waters.'

But the captain was impatient.

'What I want is some of the authorities. I want to talk with them, and blame quick.'

'Then I'll do just as well.'

Again that insidious suggestion of peace, and his ship a raging furnace beneath his feet! The captain's eyebrows lifted impatiently and nervously, and his

fist clenched as if he were about to strike a blow with it.

‘Who in hell are you?’ he demanded.

‘I am the chief magistrate,’ was the reply in a voice that was still the softest and gentlest imaginable.

The tall, heavy-shouldered man broke out in a harsh laugh that was partly amusement, but mostly hysterical. Both he and the captain regarded McCoy with incredulity and amazement. That this barefooted beachcomber should possess such high-sounding dignity was inconceivable. His cotton shirt, unbuttoned, exposed a grizzled chest and the fact that there was no undershirt beneath. A worn straw hat failed to hide the ragged grey hair. Half-way down his chest descended an untrimmed patriarchal beard. In any slop-shop, two shillings would have outfitted him complete as he stood before them.

‘Any relation to the McCoy of the *Bounty*?’ the captain asked.

‘He was my great-grandfather.’

‘Oh,’ said the captain, then bethought himself. ‘My name is Davenport, and this is my first mate, Mr. Konig.’

They shook hands.

‘And now to business.’ The captain spoke quickly, the urgency of a great haste pressing his speech. ‘We’ve been on fire for over two weeks. She’s ready to break all hell loose any moment. That’s why I held for Pitcairn. I want to beach her, or scuttle her, and save the hull.’

‘Then you made a mistake, Captain,’ said McCoy. ‘You should have slacked away for Mangareva. There’s a beautiful beach there, in a lagoon where the water is like a mill-pond.’

‘But we’re here, ain’t we?’ the first mate demanded. ‘That’s the point. We’re here, and we’ve got to do something.’

McCoy shook his head kindly.

'You can do nothing here. There is no beach. There isn't even anchorage.'

'Gammon!' said the mate. 'Gammon!' he repeated loudly, as the captain signalled him to be more soft-spoken. 'You can't tell me that sort of stuff. Where d'ye keep your own boats, hey—your schooner, or cutter, or whatever you have? Hey? Answer me that.'

McCoy smiled as gently as he spoke. His smile was a caress, an embrace that surrounded the tired mate and sought to draw him into the quietude and rest of McCoy's tranquil soul.

'We have no schooner or cutter,' he replied. 'And we carry our canoes to the top of the cliff.'

'You've got to show me,' snorted the mate. 'How d'ye get around to the other islands, heh? Tell me that.'

'We don't get around. As governor of Pitcairn, I sometimes go. When I was younger, I was away a great deal—sometimes on the trading schooners, but mostly on the missionary brig. But she's gone now, and we depend on passing vessels. Sometimes we have had as high as six calls in one year. At other times, a year, and even longer, has gone by without one passing ship. Yours is the first in seven months.'

'And you mean to tell me——' the mate began.

But Captain Davenport interfered.

'Enough of this. We're losing time. What is to be done, Mr. McCoy?'

The old man turned his brown eyes, sweet as a woman's, shoreward, and both captain and mate followed his gaze around from the lonely rock of Pitcairn to the crew clustering forward and waiting anxiously for the announcement of a decision. McCoy did not hurry. He thought smoothly and slowly, step by step, with the certitude of a mind that was never vexed or outraged by life.

‘The wind is light now,’ he said finally. ‘There is a heavy current setting to the westward.’

‘That’s what made us fetch to leeward,’ the captain interrupted, desiring to vindicate his seamanship.

‘Yes, that is what fetched you to leeward,’ McCoy went on. ‘Well, you can’t work up against this current to-day. And if you did, there is no beach. Your ship will be a total loss.’

He paused, and captain and mate looked despair at each other.

‘But I will tell you what you can do. The breeze will freshen to-night around midnight—see those tails of clouds and that thickness to windward, beyond the point there? That’s where she’ll come from, out of the south-east, hard. It is three hundred miles to Mangareva. Square away for it. There is a beautiful bed for your ship there.’

The mate shook his head.

‘Come into the cabin, and we’ll look at the chart,’ said the captain.

McCoy found a stifling, poisonous atmosphere in the pent cabin. Stray waftures of invisible gases hit his eyes and made them sting. The deck was hotter, almost unbearably hot to his bare feet. The sweat poured out of his body. He looked almost with apprehension about him. This malignant, internal heat was astounding. It was a marvel that the cabin did not burst into flames. He had a feeling as if of being in a huge bake-oven where the heat might at any moment increase tremendously and shrivel him up like a blade of grass.

As he lifted one foot and rubbed the hot sole against the leg of his trousers, the mate laughed in a savage, snarling fashion.

‘The ante-room of hell,’ he said. ‘Hell herself is right down there under your feet.’

‘It’s hot!’ McCoy cried involuntarily, mopping his face with a bandana handkerchief.



'Here's Mangareva,' the captain said, bending over the table and pointing to a black speck in the midst of the white blankness of the chart. 'And here, in between, is another island. Why not run for that?'

McCoy did not look at the chart.

'That's Crescent Island,' he answered. 'It is uninhabited, and it is only two or three feet above water. Lagoon, but no entrance. No, Mangareva is the nearest place for your purpose.'

'Mangareva it is, then,' said Captain Davenport, interrupting the mate's growling objection. 'Call the crew aft, Mr. Konig.'

The sailors obeyed, shuffling wearily along the deck and painfully endeavouring to make haste. Exhaustion was evident in every movement. The cook came out of his galley to hear, and the cabin-boy hung about near him.

When Captain Davenport had explained the situation and announced his intention of running for Mangareva, an uproar broke out. Against a background of throaty rumbling arose inarticulate cries of rage, with here and there a distinct curse, or word, or phrase. A shrill Cockney voice soared and dominated for a moment, crying: 'Gawd! After bein' in 'ell for fifteen days—an' now 'e wants us to sail this floatin' 'ell to sea again!'

The captain could not control them, but McCoy's gentle presence seemed to rebuke and calm them, and the muttering and cursing died away, until the full crew, save here and there an anxious face directed at the captain, yearned dumbly towards the green-clad peaks and beetling coast of Pitcairn.

Soft as a spring zephyr was the voice of McCoy.

'Captain, I thought I heard some of them say they were starving.'

'Ay,' was the answer, 'and so we are. I've had a sea-biscuit and a spoonful of salmon in the last two days. We're on whack. You see, when we

discovered the fire, we battened down immediately to suffocate the fire. And then we found how little food there was in the pantry. But it was too late. We didn't dare break out the lazarette. Hungry? I'm just as hungry as they are.'

He spoke to the men again, and again the throat-rumbling and cursing arose, their faces convulsed and animal-like with rage. The second and third mates had joined the captain, standing behind him at the break of the poop. Their faces were set and expressionless; they seemed bored, more than anything else, by this mutiny of the crew. Captain Davenport glanced questioningly at his first mate, and that person merely shrugged his shoulders in token of his helplessness.

'You see,' the captain said to McCoy, 'you can't compel sailors to leave the safe land and go to sea on a burning vessel. She has been their floating coffin for over two weeks now. They are worked out, and starved out, and they've got enough of her. We'll beat up for Pitcairn.'

But the wind was light, the *Pyrenees'* bottom was foul, and she could not beat up against the strong westerly current. At the end of two hours she had lost three miles. The sailors worked eagerly, as if by main strength they could compel the *Pyrenees* against the adverse elements. But steadily, port tack and starboard tack, she sagged off to the westward. The captain paced restlessly up and down, pausing occasionally to survey the vagrant smoke-wisps and to trace them back to the portions of the deck from which they sprang. The carpenter was engaged constantly in attempting to locate such places, and, when he succeeded, in caulking them tighter and tighter.

'Well, what do you think?' the captain finally asked McCoy, who was watching the carpenter with all a child's interest and curiosity in his eyes.

McCoy looked shoreward, where the land was disappearing in the thickening haze.

‘I think it would be better to square away for Mangareva. With that breeze that is coming in, you’ll be there to-morrow evening.’

‘But what if the fire breaks out? It is liable to do it any moment.’

‘Have your boats ready in the falls. The same breeze will carry your boats to Mangareva if the ship burns out from under.’

Captain Davenport debated for a moment, and then McCoy heard the question he had not wanted to hear, but which he knew was surely coming.

‘I have no chart of Mangareva. On the general chart it is only a fly-speck. I would not know where to look for the entrance into the lagoon. Will you come along and pilot her in for me?’

McCoy’s serenity was unbroken.

‘Yes, Captain,’ he said, with the same quiet unconcern with which he would have accepted an invitation to dinner; ‘I’ll go with you to Mangareva.’

Again the crew was called aft, and the captain spoke to them from the break of the poop.

‘We’ve tried to work her up, but you see how we’ve lost ground. She’s setting off in a two-knot current. This gentleman is the Honourable McCoy, Chief Magistrate and Governor of Pitcairn Island. He will come along with us to Mangareva. So you see the situation is not so dangerous. He would not make such an offer if he thought he was going to lose his life. Besides, whatever risk there is, if he of his own free will come on board and take it, we can do no less. What do you say for Mangareva?’

This time there was no uproar. McCoy’s presence, the surety and calm that seemed to radiate from him, had had its effect. They conferred with one another in low voices. There was little urging. They were virtually unanimous, and they shoved

the Cockney out as their spokesman. That worthy was overwhelmed with consciousness of the heroism of himself and his mates, and with flashing eyes he cried:

‘By Gawd! if ’e will, we will!’

The crew mumbled its assent and started forward.

‘One moment, Captain,’ McCoy said, as the other was turning to give orders to the mate. ‘I must go ashore first.’

Mr. Konig was thunderstruck, staring at McCoy as if he were a madman.

‘Go ashore!’ the captain cried. ‘What for? It will take you three hours to get there in your canoe.’

McCoy measured the distance of the land away, and nodded.

‘Yes, it is six now. I won’t get ashore till nine. The people cannot be assembled earlier than ten. As the breeze freshens up to-night, you can begin to work up against it, and pick me up at daylight to-morrow morning.’

‘In the name of reason and common sense,’ the captain burst forth, ‘what do you want to assemble the people for? Don’t you realize that my ship is burning beneath me?’

McCoy was as placid as a summer sea, and the other’s anger produced not the slightest ripple upon it.

‘Yes, Captain,’ he cooed in his dove-like voice. ‘I do realize that your ship is burning. That is why I am going with you to Mangareva. But I must get permission to go with you. It is our custom. It is an important matter when the governor leaves the island. The people’s interests are at stake, and so they have the right to vote their permission or refusal. But they will give it, I know that.’

‘Are you sure?’

‘Quite sure.’

'Then if you know they will give it, why bother with getting it? Think of the delay—a whole night.'

'It is our custom,' was the imperturbable reply. 'Also, I am the governor, and I must make arrangements for the conduct of the island during my absence.'

'But it is only a twenty-four-hour run to Mangareva,' the captain objected. 'Suppose it took you six times that long to return to windward; that would bring you back by the end of a week.'

McCoy smiled his large, benevolent smile.

'Very few vessels come to Pitcairn, and when they do, they are usually from San Francisco or from around the Horn. I shall be fortunate if I get back in six months. I may be away a year, and I may have to go to San Francisco in order to find a vessel that will bring me back. My father once left Pitcairn to be gone three months, and two years passed before he could get back. Then, too, you are short of food. If you have to take to the boats, and the weather comes up bad, you may be days in reaching land. I can bring off two canoe loads of food in the morning. Dried bananas will be best. As the breeze freshens, you beat up against it. The nearer you are, the bigger loads I can bring off. Good-bye.'

He held out his hand. The captain shook it, and was reluctant to let go. He seemed to cling to it as a drowning sailor clings to a life-buoy.

'How do I know you will come back in the morning?' he asked.

'Yes, that's it!' cried the mate. 'How do we know but what he's skinning out to save his own hide?'

McCoy did not speak. He looked at them sweetly and benignantly, and it seemed to them that they received a message from his tremendous certitude of soul.

The captain released his hand, and, with a last sweeping glance that embraced the crew in its benediction, McCoy went over the rail and descended into his canoe.

The wind freshened, and the *Pyrenees*, despite the foulness of her bottom, won half a dozen miles away from the westerly current. At daylight, with Pitcairn three miles to windward, Captain Davenport made out two canoes coming off to him. Again McCoy clambered up the side and dropped over the rail to the hot deck. He was followed by many packages of dried bananas, each package wrapped in dry leaves.

'Now, Captain,' he said, 'swing the yards and drive for dear life. You see, I am no navigator,' he explained a few minutes later, as he stood by the captain aft, the latter with gaze wandering from aloft to overside as he estimated the *Pyrenees*' speed. 'You must fetch her to Mangareva. When you have picked up the land, then I will pilot her in. What do you think she is making?'

'Eleven,' Captain Davenport answered, with a final glance at the water rushing past.

'Eleven. Let me see, if she keeps up that gait, we'll sight Mangareva between eight and nine o'clock to-morrow morning. I'll have her on the beach by ten, or by eleven at latest. And then your troubles will be all over.'

It almost seemed to the captain that the blissful moment had already arrived, such was the persuasive convincingness of McCoy. Captain Davenport had been under the fearful strain of navigating his burning ship for over two weeks, and he was beginning to feel that he had had enough.

A heavier flaw of wind struck the back of his neck and whistled by his ears. He measured the weight of it, and looked quickly overside.

'The wind is making all the time,' he announced.

'The old girl's doing nearer twelve than eleven right now. If this keeps up, we'll be shortening down to-night.'

All day the *Pyrenees*, carrying her load of living fire, tore across the foaming sea. By nightfall, royals and topgallant sails were in, and she flew on into the darkness, with great, crested seas roaring after her. The auspicious wind had had its effect, and fore and aft a visible brightening was apparent. In the second dog-watch some careless soul started a song, and by eight bells the whole crew was singing.

Captain Davenport had his blankets brought up and spread on top of the house.

'I've forgotten what sleep is,' he explained to McCoy. 'I'm all in. But give me a call at any time you think necessary.'

At three in the morning he was aroused by a gentle tugging at his arm. He sat up quickly, bracing himself against the skylight, stupid yet from his heavy sleep. The wind was thrumming its war-song in the rigging, and a wild sea was buffeting the *Pyrenees*. Amidships she was wallowing first one rail under and then the other, flooding the waist more often than not. McCoy was shouting something he could not hear. He reached out, clutched the other by the shoulder, and drew him close so that his own ear was close to the other's lips.

'It's three o'clock,' came McCoy's voice, still retaining its dove-like quality, but curiously muffled, as if from a long way off. 'We've run two hundred and fifty. Crescent Island is only thirty miles away, somewhere there dead ahead. There's no lights on it. If we keep running, we'll pile up, and lose ourselves as well as the ship.'

'What d'ye think—heave to?'

'Yes; heave to till daylight. It will only put us back four hours.'

So the *Pyrenees*, with her cargo of fire, was hove to, biting the teeth of the gale, and fighting and smashing the pounding seas. She was a shell, filled with a conflagration, and on the outside of the shell, clinging precariously, the little motes of men, by pull and haul, helped her in the battle.

‘It is most unusual, this gale,’ McCoy told the captain, in the lee of the cabin. ‘By rights there should be no gale at this time of the year. But everything about the weather has been unusual. There has been a stoppage of the trades, and now it’s howling right out of the trade quarter.’ He waved his hand into the darkness, as if his vision could dimly penetrate for hundreds of miles. ‘It is off to the westward. There is something big making off there somewhere—a hurricane or something. We’re lucky to be so far to the eastward. But this is only a little blow,’ he added. ‘It can’t last. I can tell you that much.’

By daylight the gale had eased down to normal. But daylight revealed a new danger. It had come on thick. The sea was covered by a fog, or, rather, by a pearly mist that was fog-like in density, in so far as it obstructed vision, but that was no more than a film on the sea, for the sun shot it through and filled it with a glowing radiance.

The deck of the *Pyrenees* was making more smoke than on the preceding day, and the cheerfulness of officers and crew had vanished. In the lee of the galley the cabin-boy could be heard whimpering. It was his first voyage, and the fear of death was at his heart. The captain wandered about like a lost soul, nervously chewing his moustache, scowling, unable to make up his mind what to do.

‘What do you think?’ he asked, pausing by the side of McCoy, who was making a breakfast off fried bananas and a mug of water.

McCoy finished the last banana, drained the mug,



and looked slowly around. In his eyes was a smile of tenderness as he said:

'Well, Captain, we might as well drive as burn. Your decks are not going to hold out for ever. They are hotter this morning. You haven't a pair of shoes I can wear? It is getting uncomfortable for my bare feet.'

The *Pyrenees* shipped two heavy seas as she was swung off and put once more before it, and the first mate expressed a desire to have all that water down in the hold, if only it could be introduced without taking off the hatches. McCoy ducked his head into the binnacle and watched the course set.

'I'd hold her up some more, Captain,' he said. 'She's been making drift when hove to.'

'I've set it to a point higher already,' was the answer. 'Isn't that enough?'

'I'd make it two points, Captain. This bit of a blow kicked that westerly current ahead faster than you imagine.'

Captain Davenport compromised on a point an a half, and then went aloft, accompanied by McCoy and the first mate, to keep a look-out for land. Sail had been made, so that the *Pyrenees* was doing ten knots. The following sea was dying down rapidly. There was no break in the pearly fog, and by ten o'clock Captain Davenport was growing nervous. All hands were at their stations, ready, at the first warning of land ahead, to spring like fiends to the task of bringing the *Pyrenees* up on the wind. That land ahead, a surf-washed outer reef, would be perilously close when it revealed itself in such a fog.

Another hour passed. The three watchers aloft stared intently into the pearly radiance.

'What if we miss Mangareva?' Captain Davenport asked abruptly.

McCoy, without shifting his gaze, answered softly:

'Why, let her drive, Captain. That is all we can do. All the Paumotus are before us. We can drive for a thousand miles through reefs and atolls. We are bound to fetch up somewhere.'

'Then drive it is.' Captain Davenport evidenced his intention of descending to the deck. 'We've missed Mangareva. God knows where the next land is. I wish I'd held her up that other half-point,' he confessed a moment later. 'This cursed current plays the devil with a navigator.'

'The old navigators called the Paumotus the Dangerous Archipelago,' McCoy said, when they had regained the poop. 'This very current was partly responsible for that name.'

'I was talking with a sailor chap in Sydney, once,' said Mr. Konig. 'He'd been trading in the Paumotus. He told me insurance was 18 per cent. Is that right?'

McCoy smiled and nodded.

'Except that they don't insure,' he explained. 'The owners write off 20 per cent. of the cost of their schooners each year.'

'My God!' Captain Davenport groaned. 'That makes the life of a schooner only five years!' He shook his head sadly, murmuring, 'Bad waters: bad waters!'

Again they went into the cabin to consult the big general chart; but the poisonous vapours drove them coughing and gasping on deck.

'Here is Moerenhout Island.' Captain Davenport pointed it out on the chart, which he had spread on the house. 'It can't be more than a hundred miles to leeward.'

'A hundred and ten.' McCoy shook his head doubtfully. 'It might be done, but it is very difficult. I might beach her, and then again I might put her on the reef. A bad place, a very bad place.'

'We'll take the chance,' was Captain Davenport's decision, as he set about working out the course.

Sail was shortened early in the afternoon, to avoid running past in the night; and in the second dog-watch the crew manifested its regained cheerfulness. Land was so very near, and their troubles would be over in the morning.

But morning broke clear, with a blazing tropic sun. The south-east trade had swung around to the eastward, and was driving the *Pyrenees* through the water at an eight-knot clip. Captain Davenport worked up his dead reckoning, allowing generously for drift, and announced Moerenhout Island to be not more than ten miles off. The *Pyrenees* sailed the ten miles; she sailed ten miles more; and the look-outs at the three mast-heads saw naught but the naked, sun-washed sea.

'But the land is there, I tell you,' Captain Davenport shouted to them from the poop.

McCoy smiled soothingly, but the captain glared about him like a madman, fetched his sextant, and took a chronometer sight.

'I knew I was right,' he almost shouted, when he had worked up the observation. 'Twenty-one, fifty-five, south; one-thirty-six, two, west. There you are. We're eight miles to windward yet. What did you make it out, Mr. Konig?'

The first mate glanced at his own figures, and said in a low voice:

'Twenty-one, fifty-five all right; but my longitude's one-thirty-six, forty-eight. That puts us considerably to leeward——'

But Captain Davenport ignored his figures with so contemptuous a silence as to make Mr. Konig grit his teeth and curse savagely under his breath.

'Keep her off,' the captain ordered the man at the wheel. 'Three points—steady there, as she goes!'

Then he returned to his figures and worked them

over. The sweat poured from his face. He chewed his moustache, his lips, and his pencil, staring at the figures as a man might at a ghost. Suddenly, with a fierce, muscular outburst, he crumpled the scribbled paper in his fist and crushed it underfoot. Mr. Konig grinned vindictively and turned away, while Captain Davenport leaned against the cabin and for half an hour spoke no word, contenting himself with gazing to leeward with an expression of musing hopelessness on his face.

‘Mr. McCoy,’ he broke silence abruptly. ‘The chart indicates a group of islands, but not how many, off there to the north’ard, or nor’-nor’westward, about forty miles—the Acteon Islands. What about them?’

‘There are four, all low,’ McCoy answered. ‘First to the south-east is Matueri—no people, no entrance to the lagoon. Then comes Tenarunga. There used to be about a dozen people there, but they may be all gone now. Anyway, there is no entrance for a ship—only a boat entrance, with a fathom of water. Vehauga and Teua-raro are the other two. No entrances, no people, very low. There is no bed for the *Pyrenees* in that group. She would be a total wreck.’

‘Listen to that!’ Captain Davenport was frantic. ‘No people! No entrances! What in the devil are islands good for?’

‘Well, then,’ he barked suddenly, like an excited terrier, ‘the chart gives a whole mess of islands off to the nor’west. What about them? What one has an entrance where I can lay my ship?’

McCoy calmly considered. He did not refer to the chart. All these islands, reefs, shoals, lagoons, entrances, and distances were marked on the chart of his memory. He knew them as the city dweller knows his buildings, streets, and alleys.

‘Papakena and Vanavana are off there to the

westward, or west-nor'westward a hundred miles and a bit more,' he said. 'One is uninhabited, and I heard that the people on the other had gone off to Cadmus Island. Anyway, neither lagoon has an entrance. Ahunui is another hundred miles on to the nor'west. No entrance, no people.'

'Well, forty miles beyond them are two islands?' Captain Davenport queried, raising his head from the chart.

McCoy shook his head.

'Paros and Manuhungi—no entrances, no people. Nengo-Nengo is forty miles beyond them, in turn, and it has no people and no entrance. But there is Hao Island. It is just the place. The lagoon is thirty miles long and five miles wide. There are plenty of people. You can usually find water. And any ship in the world can go through the entrance.'

He ceased and gazed solicitously at Captain Davenport, who, bending over the chart with a pair of dividers in hand, had just emitted a low groan.

'Is there any lagoon with an entrance anywhere nearer than Hao Island?' he asked.

'No, Captain; that is the nearest.'

'Well, it's three hundred and forty miles.' Captain Davenport was speaking very slowly, with decision. 'I won't risk the responsibility of all these lives. I'll wreck her on the Acteons. And she's a good ship, too,' he added regretfully, after altering the course, this time making more allowance than ever for the westerly current.

An hour later the sky was overcast. The south-east trade still held, but the ocean was a checker-board of squalls.

'We'll be there by one o'clock,' Captain Davenport announced confidently. 'By two o'clock at the outside. McCoy, you put her ashore on the one where the people are.'

The sun did not appear again, nor, at one o'clock,

was any land to be seen. Captain Davenport looked astern at the *Pyrenees*' canting wake.

'Good Lord!' he cried. 'An easterly current! Look at that!'

Mr. Konig was incredulous. McCoy was non-committal, though he said that in the Paumotus there was no reason why it should not be an easterly current. A few minutes later a squall robbed the *Pyrenees* temporarily of all her wind, and she was left rolling heavily in the trough.

'Where's that deep lead? Over with it, you there!' Captain Davenport held the lead-line and watched it sag off to the north-east. 'There, look at that! Take hold of it for yourself.'

McCoy and the mate tried it, and felt the line thrumming and vibrating savagely to the grip of the tidal stream.

'A four-knot current,' said Mr. Konig.

'An easterly current instead of a westerly,' said Captain Davenport, glaring accusingly at McCoy, as if to cast the blame for it upon him.

'That is one of the reasons, Captain, for insurance being 18 per cent. in these waters,' McCoy answered cheerfully. 'You never can tell. The currents are always changing. There was a man who wrote books, I forget his name, in the yacht *Casco*. He missed Takaroa by thirty miles and fetched Tikei, all because of the shifting currents. You are up to windward now, and you'd better keep off a few points.'

'But how much has this current sent me?' the captain demanded irately. 'How am I to know how much to keep off?'

'I don't know, Captain,' McCoy said with great gentleness.

The wind returned, and the *Pyrenees*, her deck smoking and shimmering in the bright grey light, ran off dead to leeward. Then she worked back,

port tack and starboard tack, criss-crossing her track, combing the sea for the Acteon Islands, which the mast-head look-outs failed to sight.

Captain Davenport was beside himself. His rage took the form of sullen silence, and he spent the afternoon in pacing the poop or leaning against the weather-shrouds. At nightfall, without even consulting McCoy, he squared away and headed into the north-west. Mr. Konig, surreptitiously consulting chart and binnacle, and McCoy, openly and innocently consulting the binnacle, knew that they were running for Hao Island. By midnight the squalls ceased, and the stars came out. Captain Davenport was cheered by the promise of a clear day.

'I'll get an observation in the morning,' he told McCoy, 'though what my latitude is, is a puzzler. But I'll use the Sumner method, and settle that. Do you know the Sumner line?'

And thereupon he explained it in detail to McCoy.

The day proved clear, the trade blew steadily out of the east, and the *Pyrenees* just as steadily logged her nine knots. Both the captain and mate worked out the position on a Sumner line, and agreed, and at noon agreed again, and verified the morning sights by the noon sights.

'Another twenty-four hours and we'll be there,' Captain Davenport assured McCoy. 'It's a miracle the way the old girl's decks hold out. But they can't last. They can't last. Look at them smoke, more and more every day. Yet it was a tight deck to begin with, fresh-caulked in 'Frisco. I was surprised when the fire first broke out and we battened down. Look at that!'

He broke off to gaze with dropped jaw at a spiral of smoke that coiled and twisted in the lee of the mizen-mast twenty feet above the deck.

'Now, how did that get there?' he demanded indignantly.

Beneath it there was no smoke. Crawling up from the deck, sheltered from the wind by the mast, by some freak it took form and visibility at that height. It writhed away from the mast, and for a moment overhung the captain like some threatening portent. The next moment the wind whisked it away, and the captain's jaw returned to place.

'As I was saying, when we first battened down, I was surprised. It was a tight deck, yet it leaked smoke like a sieve. And we've caulked and caulked ever since. There must be tremendous pressure underneath to drive so much smoke through.'

That afternoon the sky became overcast again, and squally, drizzly weather set in. The wind shifted back and forth between south-east and north-east, and at midnight the *Pyrenees* was caught aback by a sharp squall from the south-west, from which point the wind continued to blow intermittently.

'We won't make Hao until ten or eleven,' Captain Davenport complained at seven in the morning, when the fleeting promise of the sun had been erased by hazy cloud masses in the eastern sky. And the next moment he was plaintively demanding, 'And what are the currents doing?'

Look-outs at the mast-heads could report no land, and the day passed in drizzling calms and violent squalls. By nightfall a heavy sea began to make from the west. The barometer had fallen to 29.50. There was no wind, and still the ominous sea continued to increase. Soon the *Pyrenees* was rolling madly in the huge waves that marched in an unending procession from out of the darkness of the west. Sail was shortened as fast as both watches could work, and, when the tired crew had finished, its grumbling and complaining voices, peculiarly animal-like and menacing, could be heard in the darkness. Once the starboard watch was called aft to lash down and make secure, and the men openly



advertised their sullenness and unwillingness. Every slow movement was a protest and a threat. The atmosphere was moist and sticky like mucilage, and in the absence of wind all hands seemed to pant and gasp for air. The sweat stood out on faces and bare arms, and Captain Davenport for one, his face more gaunt and careworn than ever, and his eyes troubled and staring, was oppressed by a feeling of impending calamity.

‘It’s off to the westward,’ McCoy said encouragingly. ‘At worst, we’ll be only on the edge of it.’

But Captain Davenport refused to be comforted, and by the light of a lantern read up the chapter in his *Epitome* that related to the strategy of shipmasters in cyclonic storms. From somewhere amidships the silence was broken by a low whimpering from the cabin-boy.

‘Oh, shut up!’ Captain Davenport yelled suddenly and with such force as to startle every man on board and to frighten the offender into a wild wail of terror.

‘Mr. Konig,’ the captain said in a voice that trembled with rage and nerves, ‘will you kindly step for’ard and stop that brat’s mouth with a deck-mop?’

But it was McCoy who went forward, and in a few minutes had the boy comforted and asleep.

Shortly before daybreak the first breath of air began to move from out the south-east, increasing swiftly to a stiff and stiffer breeze. All hands were on deck waiting for what might be behind it.

‘We’re all right now, Captain,’ said McCoy, standing close to his shoulder. ‘The hurricane is to the west’ard, and we are south of it. This breeze is the in-suck. It won’t blow any harder. You can begin to put sail on her.’

‘But what’s the good? Where shall I sail? This is the second day without observations, and we

should have sighted Hao Island yesterday morning. Which way does it bear, north, south, east, or what? Tell me that, and I'll make sail in a jiffy.'

'I am no navigator, Captain,' McCoy said in his mild way.

'I used to think I was one,' was the retort, 'before I got into these Paumotus.'

At midday the cry of 'Breakers ahead!' was heard from the look-out. The *Pyrenees* was kept off, and sail after sail was loosed and sheeted home. The *Pyrenees* was sliding through the water and fighting a current that threatened to set her down upon the breakers. Officers and men were working like mad, cook and cabin-boy, Captain Davenport himself, and McCoy all lending a hand. It was a close shave. It was a low shoal, a bleak and perilous place over which the seas broke unceasingly, where no man could live, and on which not even sea-birds could rest. The *Pyrenees* was swept within a hundred yards of it before the wind carried her clear, and at this moment the panting crew, its work done, burst out in a torrent of curses upon the head of McCoy—of McCoy who had come on board, and proposed the run to Mangareva, and lured them all away from the safety of Pitcairn Island to certain destruction in this baffling and terrible stretch of sea. But McCoy's tranquil soul was undisturbed. He smiled at them with simple and gracious benevolence, and, somehow, the exalted goodness of him seemed to penetrate to their dark and sombre souls, shaming them, and from very shame stilling the curses vibrating in their throats.

'Bad waters! bad waters!' Captain Davenport was murmuring as his ship forged clear; but he broke off abruptly to gaze at the shoal which should have been dead astern, but which was already on the *Pyrenees'* weather-quarter and working up rapidly to windward.

He sat down and buried his face in his hands. And the first mate saw, and McCoy saw, and the crew saw, what he had seen. South of the shoal an easterly current had set them down upon it; north of the shoal an equally swift westerly current had clutched the ship and was sweeping her away.

'I've heard of these Paumotus before,' the captain groaned, lifting his blanched face from his hands. 'Captain Moyendale told me about them after losing his ship on them. And I laughed at him behind his back. God forgive me, I laughed at him. What shoal is that?' he broke off, to ask McCoy.

'I don't know, Captain.'

'Why don't you know?'

'Because I never saw it before, and because I have never heard of it. I do know that it is not charted. These waters have never been thoroughly surveyed.'

'Then you don't know where we are?'

'No more than you do,' McCoy said gently.

At four in the afternoon coco-nut trees were sighted, apparently growing out of the water. A little later the low land of an atoll was raised above the sea.

'I know where we are now, Captain.' McCoy lowered the glasses from his eyes. 'That's Resolution Island. We are forty miles beyond Hao Island, and the wind is in our teeth.'

'Get ready to beach her then. Where's the entrance?'

'There's only a canoe passage. But now that we know where we are, we can run for Barclay de Tolley. It is only one hundred and twenty miles from here, due nor'-nor'west. With this breeze we can be there by nine o'clock to-morrow morning.'

Captain Davenport consulted the chart and debated with himself.

'If we wreck her here,' McCoy added, 'we'd

have to make the run to Barclay de Tolley in the boats just the same.'

The captain gave his orders, and once more the *Pyrenees* swung off for another run across the inhospitable sea.

And the middle of the next afternoon saw despair and mutiny on her smoking deck. The current had accelerated, the wind had slackened, and the *Pyrenees* had sagged off to the west. The look-out sighted Barclay de Tolley to the eastward, barely visible from the mast-head, and vainly and for hours the *Pyrenees* tried to beat up to it. Ever, like a mirage, the coco-nut trees hovered on the horizon, visible only from the mast-head. From the deck they were hidden by the bulge of the world.

Again Captain Davenport consulted McCoy and the chart. Makemo lay seventy-five miles to the south-west. Its lagoon was thirty miles long, and its entrance was excellent. When Captain Davenport gave his orders, the crew refused duty. They announced that they had had enough of hell-fire under their feet. There was the land. What if the ship could not make it? They could make it in the boats. Let her burn, then. Their lives amounted to something to them. They had served faithfully the ship, now they were going to serve themselves.

They sprang to the boats, brushing the second and third mates out of the way, and proceeded to swing the boats out and to prepare to lower away. Captain Davenport and the first mate, revolvers in hand, were advancing to the break of the poop, when McCoy, who had climbed on top of the cabin, began to speak.

He spoke to the sailors, and at first sound of his dove-like, cooing voice they paused to hear. He extended to them his own ineffable serenity and peace. His soft voice and simple thoughts flowed out to them in a magic stream, soothing them against

their wills. Long-forgotten things came back to them, and some remembered lullaby songs of childhood and the content and rest of the mother's arm at the end of the day. There was no more trouble, no more danger, no more irk, in all the world. Everything was as it should be, and it was only a matter of course that they should turn their backs upon the land and put to sea once more with hell-fire hot beneath their feet.

McCoy spoke simply; but it was not what he spoke. It was his personality that spoke more eloquently than any word he could utter. It was an alchemy of soul occultly subtle and profoundly deep—a mysterious emanation of the spirit, seductive, sweetly humble, and terribly imperious. It was illumination in the dark crypts of their souls, a compulsion of purity and gentleness vastly greater than that which resided in the shining, death-spitting revolvers of the officers.

The men wavered reluctantly where they stood, and those who had loosed the turns made them fast again. Then one, and then another, and then all of them, began to sidle awkwardly away.

McCoy's face was beaming with child-like pleasure as he descended from the top of the cabin. There was no trouble. For that matter there had been no trouble averted. There never had been any trouble, for there was no place for such in the blissful world in which he lived.

'You hypnotized 'em,' Mr. Konig grinned at him, speaking in a low voice.

'Those boys are good,' was the answer. 'Their hearts are good. They have had a hard time, and they have worked hard, and they will work hard to the end.'

Mr. Konig had no time to reply. His voice was ringing out orders, the sailors were springing to obey, and the *Pyrenees* was paying slowly off from

the wind until her bow should point in the direction of Makemo.

The wind was very light, and after sundown almost ceased. It was insufferably warm, and fore and aft men sought vainly to sleep. The deck was too hot to lie upon, and poisonous vapours, oozing through the seams, crept like evil spirits over the ship, stealing into the nostrils and windpipes of the unwary, and causing fits of sneezing and coughing. The stars blinked lazily in the dim vault overhead; and the full moon, rising in the east, touched with its light the myriads of wisps and threads and spidery films of smoke that intertwined and writhed and twisted along the deck, over the rails, and up the masts and shrouds.

‘Tell me,’ Captain Davenport said, rubbing his smarting eyes, ‘what happened with that *Bounty* crowd after they reached Pitcairn? The account I read said they burnt the *Bounty*, and that they were not discovered until many years later. But what happened in the meantime? I’ve always been curious to know. They were men with their necks in the rope. There were some native men, too. And then there were women. That made it look like trouble right from the jump.’

‘There was trouble,’ McCoy answered. ‘They were bad men. They quarrelled about the women right away. One of the mutineers, Williams, lost his wife. All the women were Tahitian women. His wife fell from the cliffs when hunting sea-birds. Then he took the wife of one of the native men away from him. All the native men were made very angry by this, and they killed off nearly all the mutineers. Then the mutineers that escaped killed off all the native men. The women helped. And the natives killed each other. Everybody killed everybody. They were terrible men.’

‘Timiti was killed by two other natives while

they were combing his hair in friendship. The white men had sent them to do it. Then the white men killed them. The wife of Tullaloo killed him in a cave because she wanted a white man for husband. They were very wicked. God had hidden His face from them. At the end of two years all the native men were murdered, and all the white men except four. They were Young, John Adams, McCoy, who was my great-grandfather, and Quintal. He was a very bad man, too. Once, just because his wife did not catch enough fish for him, he bit off her ear.'

'They were a bad lot!' Mr. Konig exclaimed.

'Yes, they were very bad,' McCoy agreed, and went on serenely cooing of the blood and lust of his iniquitous ancestry. 'My great-grandfather escaped murder in order to die by his own hand. He made a still and manufactured alcohol from the roots of the ti-plant. Quintal was his chum, and they got drunk together all the time. At last McCoy got delirium tremens, tied a rock to his neck, and jumped into the sea.

'Quintal's wife, the one whose ear he bit off, also got killed by falling from the cliffs. Then Quintal went to Young and demanded his wife, and went to Adams and demanded his wife. Adams and Young were afraid of Quintal. They knew he would kill them. So they killed him, the two of them together, with a hatchet. Then Young died. And that was about all the trouble they had.'

'I should say so,' Captain Davenport snorted. 'There was nobody left to kill.'

'You see, God had hidden His face,' McCoy said.

By morning no more than a faint air was blowing from the eastward, and, unable to make appreciable southing by it, Captain Davenport hauled up full-and-by on the port track. He was afraid of that terrible westerly current which had cheated him

out of so many ports of refuge. All day the calm continued, and all night, while the sailors, on a short ration of dried banana, were grumbling. Also, they were growing weak and complaining of stomach pains caused by the straight banana diet. All day the current swept the *Pyrenees* to the westward, while there was no wind to bear her south. In the middle of the first dog-watch, coco-nut trees were sighted due south, their tufted heads rising above the water and marking the low-lying atoll beneath.

‘That is Taenga Island,’ McCoy said. ‘We need a breeze to-night, or else we’ll miss Makemo.’

‘What’s become of the south-east trade?’ the captain demanded. ‘Why don’t it blow? What’s the matter?’

‘It is the evaporation from the big lagoons—there are so many of them,’ McCoy explained. ‘The evaporation upsets the whole system of trades. It even causes the wind to back up and blow gales from the south-west. This is the Dangerous Archipelago, Captain.’

Captain Davenport faced the old man, opened his mouth, and was about to curse, but paused and refrained. McCoy’s presence was a rebuke to the blasphemies that stirred in his brain and trembled in his larynx. McCoy’s influence had been growing during the many days they had been together. Captain Davenport was an autocrat of the sea, fearing no man, never bridling his tongue, and now he found himself unable to curse in the presence of this old man with the feminine brown eyes and the voice of a dove. When he realized this, Captain Davenport experienced a distinct shock. This old man was merely the seed of McCoy, of McCoy of the *Bounty*, the mutineer fleeing from the hemp that waited him in England, the McCoy who was a power for evil in the early days of blood and lust and violent death on Pitcairn Island.



Captain Davenport was not religious, yet in that moment he felt a mad impulse to cast himself at the other's feet—and to say he knew not what. It was an emotion that so deeply stirred him, rather than a coherent thought, and he was aware in some vague way of his own unworthiness and smallness in the presence of this other man who possessed the simplicity of a child and the gentleness of a woman.

Of course he could not so humble himself before the eyes of his officers and men. And yet the anger that had prompted the blasphemy still raged in him. He suddenly smote the cabin with his clenched hand and cried:

'Look here, old man, I won't be beaten. These Paumotus have cheated and tricked me and made a fool of me. I refuse to be beaten. I am going to drive this ship, and drive and drive and drive clear through the Paumotus to China but what I find a bed for her. If every man deserts, I'll stay by her. I'll show the Paumotus. They can't fool me. She's a good girl, and I'll stick by her as long as there's a plank to stand on. You hear me?'

'And I'll stay with you, Captain,' McCoy said.

During the night, light, baffling airs blew out of the south, and the frantic captain, with his cargo of fire, watched and measured his westward drift and went off by himself at times to curse softly so that McCoy should not hear.

Daylight showed more palms growing out of the water to the south.

'That's the leeward point of Makemo,' McCoy said. 'Katiu is only a few miles to the west. We may make that.'

But the current, sucking between the two islands, swept them to the north-west, and at one in the afternoon they saw the palms of Katiu rise above the sea and sink back into the sea again.

A few minutes later, just as the captain had discovered that a new current from the north-east had gripped the *Pyrenees*, the mast-head look-outs raised coco-nut palms in the north-west.

'It is Raraka,' said McCoy. 'We won't make it without wind. The current is drawing us down to the south-west. But we must watch out. A few miles farther on a current flows north and turns in a circle to the north-west. This will sweep us away from Fakarava, and Fakarava is the place for the *Pyrenees* to find her bed.'

'They can sweep all they da—— all they well please,' Captain Davenport remarked with heat. 'We'll find a bed for her somewhere just the same.'

But the situation on the *Pyrenees* was reaching a culmination. The deck was so hot that it seemed an increase of a few degrees would cause it to burst into flames. In many places even the heavy-soled shoes of the men were no protection, and they were compelled to step lively to avoid scorching their feet. The smoke had increased and grown more acrid. Every man on board was suffering from inflamed eyes and they coughed and strangled like a crew of tuberculosis patients. In the afternoon the boats were swung out and equipped. The last several packages of dried bananas were stored in them, as well as the instruments of the officers. Captain Davenport even put the chronometer into the longboat, fearing the blowing up of the deck at any moment.

All night this apprehension weighed heavily on all, and in the first morning light, with hollow eyes and ghastly faces, they stared at one another as if in surprise that the *Pyrenees* still held together and that they still were alive.

Walking rapidly at times, and even occasionally breaking into an undignified hop-skip-and-run, Captain Davenport inspected his ship's deck.

‘It is a matter of hours now, if not of minutes,’ he announced on his return to the poop.

The cry of land came down from the mast-head. From the deck the land was invisible, and McCoy went aloft, while the captain took advantage of the opportunity to curse some of the bitterness out of his heart. But the cursing was suddenly stopped by a dark line on the water which he sighted to the north-east. It was not a squall, but a regular breeze—the disrupted trade-wind, eight points out of its direction, but resuming business once more.

‘Hold her up, Captain,’ McCoy said as soon as he reached the poop. ‘That’s the easterly point of Fakarava, and we’ll go in through the passage full-tilt, the wind abeam, and every sail drawing.’

At the end of an hour the coco-nut trees and the low-lying land were visible from the deck. The feeling that the end of the *Pyrenees*’ resistance was imminent weighed heavily on everybody. Captain Davenport had the three boats lowered and dropped short astern, a man in each to keep them apart. The *Pyrenees* closed skirted the shore, the surf-whitened atoll a bare two cable-lengths away.

‘Get ready to wear her, Captain,’ McCoy warned.

And a minute later the land parted, exposing a narrow passage and the lagoon beyond, a great mirror, thirty miles in length and a third as broad.

‘Now, Captain.’

For the last time the yards of the *Pyrenees* swung around as she obeyed the wheel and headed into the passage. The turns had scarcely been made, and nothing had been coiled down, when the men and mates swept back to the poop in panic terror. Nothing had happened, yet they averred that something was going to happen. They could not tell why. They merely knew that it was about to happen. McCoy started forward to take up his

position on the bow in order to con the vessel in; but the captain gripped his arm and whirled him around.

'Do it from here,' he said. 'That deck's not safe. What's the matter?' he demanded the next instant. 'We're standing still.'

McCoy smiled.

'You are bucking a seven-knot current, Captain,' he said. 'That is the way the full ebb runs out of this passage.'

At the end of another hour the *Pyrenees* had scarcely gained her length, but the wind freshened and she began to forge ahead.

'Better get into the boats, some of you,' Captain Davenport commanded.

His voice was still ringing, and the men were just beginning to move in obedience, when the amidship deck of the *Pyrenees*, in a mass of flame and smoke, was flung upward into the sails and rigging, part of it remaining there and the rest falling into the sea. The wind being abeam, was what had saved the men crowded aft. They made a blind rush to gain the boats, but McCoy's voice, carrying its convincing message of vast calm and endless time, stopped them.

'Take it easy,' he was saying. 'Everything is all right. Pass that boy down, somebody, please.'

The man at the wheel had forsaken it in a funk, and Captain Davenport had leaped and caught the spokes in time to prevent the ship from yawing in the current and going ashore.

'Better take charge of the boats,' he said to Mr. Konig. 'Tow one of them short, right under the quarter. . . . When I go over, it'll be on the jump.'

Mr. Konig hesitated, then went over the rail and lowered himself into the boat.

'Keep her off half a point, Captain.'

Captain Davenport gave a start. He had thought he had the ship to himself.

‘Ay, ay; half a point it is,’ he answered.

Amidships the *Pyrenees* was an open, flaming furnace, out of which poured an immense volume of smoke which rose high above the masts and completely hid the forward part of the ship. McCoy, in the shelter of the mizen-shrouds, continued his difficult task of conning the ship through the intricate channel. The fire was working aft along the deck from the seat of explosion, while the soaring tower of canvas on the main-mast went up and vanished in a sheet of flame. Forward, though they could not see them, they knew that the head-sails were still drawing.

‘If only she don’t burn all her canvas off before she makes inside,’ the captain groaned.

‘She’ll make it,’ McCoy assured him with supreme confidence. ‘There is plenty of time. She is bound to make it. And once inside, we’ll put her before it; that will keep the smoke away from us and hold back the fire from working aft.’

A tongue of flame sprang up the mizen, reached hungrily for the lowest tier of canvas, missed it, and vanished. From aloft a burning shred of rope-stuff fell square on the back of Captain Davenport’s neck. He acted with the celerity of one stung by a bee as he reached up and brushed the offending fire from his skin.

‘How is she heading, Captain?’

‘Nor’west by west.’

‘Keep her west-nor’west.’

Captain Davenport put the wheel up and steadied her.

‘West by north, Captain.’

‘West by north she is.’

‘And now west.’

Slowly, point by point, as she entered the lagoon,

the *Pyrenees* described the circle that put her before the wind; and point by point, with all the calm certitude of a thousand years of time to spare, McCoy chanted the changing course.

'Another point, Captain.'

'A point it is.'

Captain Davenport whirled several spokes over, suddenly reversing and coming back one to check her.

'Steady.'

'Steady she is—right on it.'

Despite the fact that the wind was now astern, the heat was so intense that Captain Davenport was compelled to steal sidelong glances into the binnacle, letting go the wheel, now with one hand, now with the other, to rub or shield his blistering cheeks. McCoy's beard was crinkling and shrivelling, and the smell of it, strong in the other's nostrils, compelled him to look toward McCoy with sudden solicitude. Captain Davenport was letting go the spokes alternately with his hands in order to rub their blistering backs against his trousers. Every sail on the mizen-mast vanished in a rush of flame, compelling the two men to crouch and shield their faces.

'Now,' said McCoy, stealing a glance ahead at the low shore, 'four points up, Captain, and let her drive.'

Shreds and patches of burning rope and canvas were falling about them and upon them. The tarry smoke from a smouldering piece of rope at the captain's feet set him off into a violent coughing fit, during which he still clung to the spokes.

The *Pyrenees* struck, her bow lifted, and she ground ahead gently to a stop. A shower of burning fragments, dislodged by the shock, fell about them. The ship moved ahead again and struck a second time. She crushed the fragile coral under her keel, drove on, and struck a third time.

'Hard over,' said McCoy. 'Hard over?' he questioned gently, a minute later.

'She won't answer,' was the reply.

'All right. She is swinging around.' McCoy peered over the side. 'Soft, white sand. Couldn't ask better. A beautiful bed.'

As the *Pyrenees* swung around her stern away from the wind, a fearful blast of smoke and flame poured aft. Captain Davenport deserted the wheel in blistering agony. He reached the painter of the boat that lay under the quarter, then looked for McCoy, who was standing aside to let him go down.

'You first,' the captain cried, gripping him by the shoulder and almost throwing him over the rail. But the flame and smoke were too terrible, and he followed hard after McCoy, both men wriggling on the rope and sliding down into the boat together. A sailor in the bow, without waiting for orders, slashed the painter through with his sheath-knife. The oars, poised in readiness, bit into the water, and the boat shot away.

'A beautiful bed, Captain,' McCoy murmured, looking back.

'Ay, a beautiful bed, and all thanks to you,' was the answer.

The three boats pulled away for the white beach of pounded coral, beyond which, on the edge of a coco-nut grove, could be seen a half-dozen grass-houses, and a score or more of excited natives, gazing wide-eyed at the conflagration that had come to land.

The boats grounded and they stepped out on the white beach.

'And now,' said McCoy, 'I must see about getting back to Pitcairn.'

## THE HOUSE OF MAPUHI

DESPITE the heavy clumsiness of her lines, the *Aorai* handled easily in the light breeze, and her captain ran her well in before he hove to just outside the suck of the surf. The atoll of Hikueru lay low on the water, a circle of pounded coral sand a hundred yards wide, twenty miles in circumference, and from three to five feet above high-water mark. On the bottom of the huge and glassy lagoon was much pearl shell, and from the deck of the schooner, across the slender ring of the atoll, the divers could be seen at work. But the lagoon had no entrance for even a trading schooner. With a favouring breeze cutters could win in through the tortuous and shallow channel, but the schooners lay off and on outside and sent in their small boats.

The *Aorai* swung out a boat smartly, into which sprang half a dozen brown-skinned sailors clad only in scarlet loin-cloths. They took the oars, while in the stern-sheets, at the steering sweep, stood a young man garbed in the tropic white that marks the European. But he was not all European. The golden strain of Polynesia betrayed itself in the sun-gilt of his fair skin and cast up golden sheens and lights through the glimmering blue of his eyes. Raoul he was, Alexandre Raoul, youngest son of Marie Raoul, the wealthy quarter-caste, who owned and managed half a dozen trading schooners similar to the *Aorai*. Across an eddy just outside the entrance, and in and through and over a boiling tide-rip, the boat fought its way to the mirrored calm of the lagoon. Young Raoul leaped out upon the white sand and shook hands with a tall native. The man's chest and shoulders were magnificent, but the stump of a right arm beyond the flesh of which



the age-whitened bone projected several inches, attested the encounter with a shark that had put an end to his diving days and made him a fawner and an intriguer for small favours.

‘Have you heard, Alec?’ were his first words. ‘Mapuhi has found a pearl—such a pearl. Never was there one like it ever fished up in Hikueru, nor in all the Paumotus, nor in all the world. Buy it from him. He has it now. And remember that I told you first. He is a fool and you can get it cheap. Have you any tobacco?’

Straight up the beach to a shack under a pandanus tree Raoul headed. He was his mother’s supercargo, and his business was to comb all the Paumotus for the wealth of copra, shell, and pearls that they yielded up.

He was a young supercargo, it was his second voyage in such capacity, and he suffered much secret worry from his lack of experience in pricing pearls. But when Mapuhi exposed the pearl to his sight he managed to suppress the start it gave him, and to maintain a careless, commercial expression on his face. For the pearl had struck him a blow. It was large as a pigeon’s egg, a perfect sphere, of a whiteness that reflected opalescent lights from all colours about it. It was alive. Never had he seen anything like it. When Mapuhi dropped it into his hand he was surprised by the weight of it. That showed that it was a good pearl. He examined it closely, through a pocket magnifying-glass. It was without flaw or blemish. The purity of it seemed almost to melt into the atmosphere out of his hands. In the shade it was softly luminous, gleaming like a tender moon. So translucently white was it that when he dropped it into a glass of water he had difficulty in finding it. So straight and swiftly had it sunk to the bottom that he knew its weight was excellent.

‘ Well, what do you want for it? ’ he asked, with a fine assumption of nonchalance.

‘ I want——’ Mapuhi began, and behind him, framing his own dark face, the dark faces of two women and a girl nodded concurrence in what he wanted. Their heads were bent forward, they were animated by a suppressed eagerness, their eyes flashed avariciously.

‘ I want a house,’ Mapuhi went on. ‘ It must have a roof of galvanized iron and an octagon-drop-clock. It must be six fathoms long with a porch all around. A big room must be in the centre, with a round table in the middle of it and the octagon-drop-clock on the wall. There must be four bedrooms, two on each side of the big room, and in each bedroom must be an iron bed, two chairs, and a washstand. And back of the house must be a kitchen, a good kitchen, with pots and pans and a stove. And you must build the house on my island, which is Fakarava.’

‘ Is that all? ’ Raoul asked incredulously.

‘ There must be a sewing-machine,’ spoke up Tefara, Mapuhi’s wife.

‘ Not forgetting the octagon-drop-clock,’ added Nauri, Mapuhi’s mother.

‘ Yes, that is all,’ said Mapuhi.

Young Raoul laughed. He laughed long and heartily. But while he laughed he secretly performed problems in mental arithmetic. He had never built a house in his life, and his notions concerning house building were hazy. While he laughed he calculated the cost of the voyage to Tahiti for materials, of the materials themselves, of the voyage back again to Fakarava, and the cost of landing the materials and of building the house. It would come to four thousand French dollars, allowing a margin for safety—four thousand French dollars were equivalent to twenty thousand francs.

It was impossible. How was he to know the value of such a pearl? Twenty thousand francs was a lot of money—and of his mother's money at that.

'Mapuhi,' he said, 'you are a big fool. Set a money price.'

But Mapuhi shook his head, and the three heads behind him shook with his.

'I want the house,' he said. 'It must be six fathoms long with a porch all around——'

'Yes, yes,' Raoul interrupted. 'I know all about your house, but it won't do. I'll give you a thousand Chili dollars.'

The four heads chorused a silent negative.

'And a hundred Chili dollars in trade.'

'I want the house,' Mapuhi began.

'What good will the house do you?' Raoul demanded. 'The first hurricane that comes along will wash it away. You ought to know. Captain Raffy says it looks like a hurricane right now.'

'Not on Fakarava,' said Mapuhi. 'The land is much higher there. On this island, yes. Any hurricane can sweep Hikueru. I will have the house on Fakarava. It must be six fathoms long with a porch all around——'

And Raoul listened again to the tale of the house. Several hours he spent in the endeavour to hammer the house obsession out of Mapuhi's mind; but Mapuhi's mother and wife, and Ngakura, Mapuhi's daughter, bolstered him in his resolve for the house. Through the open doorway, while he listened for the twentieth time to the detailed description of the house that was wanted, Raoul saw his schooner's second boat draw up on the beach. The sailors rested on the oars, advertising haste to be gone. The first mate of the *Aorai* sprang ashore, exchanged a word with the one-armed native, then hurried toward Raoul. The day grew suddenly dark, as a squall obscured the face of the sun.

Across the lagoon Raoul could see approaching the ominous line of the puff of wind.

‘ Captain Raffy says you’ve got to get to hell outa here,’ was the mate’s greeting. ‘ If there’s any shell, we’ve got to run the risk of picking it up later on—so he says. The barometer’s dropped to twenty-nine-seventy.’

The gust of wind struck the pandanus tree overhead and tore through the palms beyond, flinging half a dozen ripe coco-nuts with heavy thuds to the ground. Then came the rain out of the distance, advancing with the roar of a gale of wind and causing the water of the lagoon to smoke in driven wind-rows. The sharp rattle of the first drops was on the leaves when Raoul sprang to his feet.

‘ A thousand Chili dollars, cash down, Mapuhi,’ he said. ‘ And two hundred Chili dollars in trade.’

‘ I want a house——’ the other began.

‘ Mapuhi!’ Raoul yelled, in order to make himself heard. ‘ You are a fool!’

He flung out of the house, and, side by side with the mate, fought his way down the beach toward the boat. They could not see the boat. The tropic rain sheeted about them so that they could see only the beach under their feet and the spiteful little waves from the lagoon that snapped and bit at the sand. A figure appeared through the deluge. It was Huru-Huru, the man with the one arm.

‘ Did you get the pearl?’ he yelled in Raoul’s ear.

‘ Mapuhi is a fool!’ was the answering yell, and the next moment they were lost to each other in the descending water.

Half an hour later, Huru-Huru, watching from the seaward side of the atoll, saw the two boats hoisted in and the *Aorai* pointing her nose out to sea. And near her, just come in from the sea on the wings of the squall, he saw another schooner hove to and dropping a boat into the water. He knew

her. It was the *Orohena*, owned by Toriki, the half-caste trader, who served as his own supercargo and who doubtlessly was even then in the stern-sheets of the boat. Huru-Huru chuckled. He knew that Mapuhi owed Toriki for trade-goods advanced the year before.

The squall had passed. The hot sun was blazing down, and the lagoon was once more a mirror. But the air was sticky like mucilage, and the weight of it seemed to burden the lungs and make breathing difficult.

‘Have you heard the news, Toriki?’ Huru-Huru asked. ‘Mapuhi has found a pearl. Never was there a pearl like it ever fished up in Hikueru, nor anywhere in the Paumotus, nor anywhere in all the world. Mapuhi is a fool. Besides, he owes you money. Remember that I told you first. Have you any tobacco?’

And to the grass-shack of Mapuhi went Toriki. He was a masterful man, withal a fairly stupid one. Carelessly he glanced at the wonderful pearl—glancing for a moment only; and carelessly he dropped it into his pocket.

‘You are lucky,’ he said. ‘It is a nice pearl. I will give you credit on the books.’

‘I want a house,’ Mapuhi began, in consternation. ‘It must be six fathoms——’

‘Six fathoms your grandmother!’ was the trader’s retort. ‘You want to pay up your debts, that’s what you want. You owed me twelve hundred dollars Chili. Very well; you owe them no longer. The amount is squared. Besides, I will give you credit for two hundred Chili. If, when I get to Tahiti, the pearl sells well, I will give you credit for another hundred—that will make three hundred. But mind, only if the pearl sells well. I may even lose money on it.’

Mapuhi folded his arms in sorrow and sat with

bowed head. He had been robbed of his pearl. In place of the house, he had paid a debt. There was nothing to show for the pearl.

‘You are a fool,’ said Tefara.

‘You are a fool,’ said Nauri, his mother. ‘Why did you let the pearl into his hand?’

‘What was I to do?’ Mapuhi protested. ‘I owed him the money. He knew I had the pearl. You heard him yourself ask to see it. I had not told him. He knew. Somebody else told him. And I owed him the money.’

‘Mapuhi is a fool,’ mimicked Ngakura.

She was twelve years old and did not know any better. Mapuhi relieved his feelings by sending her reeling from a box on the ear; while Tefara and Nauri burst into tears and continued to upbraid him after the manner of women.

Huru-Huru, watching on the beach, saw a third schooner that he knew heave to outside the entrance and drop a boat. It was the *Hira*, well manned, for she was owned by Levy, the German Jew; the greatest pearl-buyer of them all, and, as was well known, Hira was the Tahitian god of fishermen and thieves.

‘Have you heard the news?’ Huru-Huru asked, as Levy, a fat man with massive asymmetrical features, stepped out upon the beach. ‘Mapuhi has found a pearl. There was never a pearl like it in Hikueru, in all the Paumotus, in all the world. Mapuhi is a fool. He has sold it to Toriki for fourteen hundred Chili—I listened outside and heard. Toriki is likewise a fool. You can buy it from him cheap. Remember that I told you first. Have you any tobacco?’

‘Where is Toriki?’

‘In the house of Captain Lynch, drinking absinth. He has been there an hour.’

And while Levy and Toriki drank absinth and

chattered over the pearl, Huru-Huru listened and heard the stupendous price of twenty-five thousand francs agreed upon.

It was at this time that both the *Orohena* and the *Hira*, running in close to the shore, began firing guns and signalling frantically. The three men stepped outside in time to see the two schooners go hastily about and head off shore, dropping mainsails and flying-jibs on the run in the teeth of the squall that heeled them far over on the whitened water. Then the rain blotted them out.

'They'll be back after it's over,' said Toriki. 'We'd better be getting out of here.'

'I reckon the glass has fallen some more,' said Captain Lynch.

He was a white-bearded sea captain, too old for service, who had learned that the only way to live on comfortable terms with his asthma was on Hikueru. He went inside to look at the barometer.

'Great God!' they heard him exclaim, and rushed in to join him at staring at a dial, which marked twenty-nine-twenty.

Again they came out, this time anxiously to consult sea and sky. The squall had cleared away, but the sky remained overcast. The two schooners, under all sail and joined by a third, could be seen making back. A veer in the wind induced them to slack off sheets, and five minutes afterward a sudden veer from the opposite quarter caught all three schooners aback, and those on shore could see the boom-tackles being slacked away or cast off on the jump. The sound of the surf was loud, hollow, and menacing, and a heavy swell was setting in. A terrible sheet of lightning burst before their eyes, illuminating the dark day, and the thunder rolled wildly about them.

Toriki and Levy broke into a run for their boats, the latter ambling along like a panic-stricken hippo-

potamus. As their two boats swept out the entrance, they passed the boat of the *Aorai* coming in. In the stern-sheets, encouraging the rowers was Raoul. Unable to shake the vision of the pearl from his mind, he was returning to accept Mapuhi's price of a house.

He landed on the beach in the midst of a driving thunder squall that was so dense that he collided with Huru-Huru before he saw him.

'Too late,' yelled Huru-Huru, 'Mapuhi sold it to Toriki for fourteen hundred Chili, and Toriki sold it to Levy for twenty-five thousand francs. And Levy will sell it in France for a hundred thousand francs. Have you any tobacco?'

Raoul felt relieved. His troubles about the pearl were over. He need not worry any more, even if he had not got the pearl. But he did not believe Huru-Huru. Mapuhi might well have sold it for fourteen hundred Chili, but that Levy, who knew pearls, should have paid twenty-five thousand francs was too wide a stretch. Raoul decided to interview Captain Lynch on the subject, but when he arrived at that ancient mariner's house, he found him looking wide-eyed at the barometer.

'What do you read it?' Captain Lynch asked anxiously, rubbing his spectacles and staring again at the instrument.

'Twenty-nine-ten,' said Raoul. 'I have never seen it so low before.'

'I should say not!' snorted the captain. 'Fifty years boy and man on all the seas, and I've never seen it go down to that. Listen!'

They stood for a moment, while the surf rumbled and shook the house. Then they went outside. The squall had passed. They could see the *Aorai* lying becalmed a mile away and pitching and tossing madly in the tremendous seas that rolled in stately procession down out of the north-east and flung



themselves furiously upon the coral shore. One of the sailors from the boat pointed at the mouth of the passage and shook his head. Raoul looked and saw a white anarchy of foam and surge.

'I guess I'll stay with you to-night, Captain,' he said; then turned to the sailor and told him to haul the boat out and to find shelter for himself and fellows.

'Twenty-nine flat,' Captain Lynch reported, coming out from another look at the barometer, a chair in his hand.

He sat down and stared at the spectacle of the sea. The sun came out, increasing the sultriness of the day, while the dead calm still held. The seas continued to increase in magnitude.

'What makes that sea is what gets me,' Raoul muttered petulantly. 'There is no wind, yet look at it, look at that fellow there!'

Miles in length, carrying tens of thousands of tons in weight, its impact shook the frail atoll like an earthquake. Captain Lynch was startled.

'Gracious!' he exclaimed, half-rising from his chair, then sinking back.

'But there is no wind,' Raoul persisted. 'I could understand it if there was wind along with it.'

'You'll get the wind soon enough without worry-in' for it,' was the grim reply.

The two men sat on in silence. The sweat stood out on their skin in myriads of tiny drops that ran together, forming blotches of moisture, which, in turn, coalesced into rivulets that dripped to the ground. They panted for breath, the old man's efforts being especially painful. A sea swept up the beach, licking around the trunks of the coconuts and subsiding almost at their feet.

'Way past high-water mark,' Captain Lynch remarked; 'and I've been here eleven years.' He looked at his watch. 'It is three o'clock.'

A man and woman, at their heels a motley following of brats and curs, trailed disconsolately by. They came to a halt beyond the house, and, after much irresolution, sat down in the sand. A few minutes later another family trailed in from the opposite direction, the men and women carrying a heterogeneous assortment of possessions. And soon several hundred persons of all ages and sexes were congregated about the captain's dwelling. He called to one new arrival, a woman with a nursing babe in her arms, and in answer received the information that her house had just been swept into the lagoon.

This was the highest spot of land in miles, and already, in many places on either hand, the great seas were making a clean breach of the slender ring of the atoll and surging into the lagoon. Twenty miles around stretched the ring of the atoll, and in no place was it more than fifty fathoms wide. It was the height of the diving season, and from all the islands around, even as far as Tahiti, the natives had gathered.

'There are twelve hundred men, women, and children here,' said Captain Lynch. 'I wonder how many will be here to-morrow morning.'

'But why don't it blow?—that's what I want to know,' Raoul demanded.

'Don't worry, young man, don't worry; you'll get your troubles fast enough.'

Even as Captain Lynch spoke, a great watery mass smote the atoll. The sea-water churned about them three inches deep under their chairs. A low wail of fear went up from the many women. The children, with clasped hands, stared at the immense rollers and cried piteously. Chickens and cats, wading perturbedly in the water, as by common consent, with flight and scramble took refuge on the roof of the captain's house. A Paumotan, with a

litter of new-born puppies in a basket, climbed into a coco-nut tree and twenty feet above the ground made the basket fast. The mother floundered about in the water beneath, whining and yelping.

And still the sun shone brightly and the dead calm continued. They sat and watched the seas and the insane pitching of the *Aorai*. Captain Lynch gazed at the huge mountains of water sweeping in until he could gaze no more. He covered his face with his hands to shut out the sight; then went into the house.

'Twenty-eight-sixty,' he said quietly when he returned.

In his arm was a coil of small rope. He cut it into two-fathom lengths, giving one to Raoul and, retaining one for himself, distributed the remainder among the women with the advice to pick out a tree and climb.

A light air began to blow out of the north-east, and the fan of it on his cheek seemed to cheer Raoul up. He could see the *Aorai* trimming her sheets and heading off shore, and he regretted that he was not on her. She would get away at any rate, but as for the atoll——. A sea breached across, almost sweeping him off his feet, and he selected a tree. Then he remembered the barometer and ran back to the house. He encountered Captain Lynch on the same errand and together they went in.

'Twenty-eight-twenty,' said the old mariner. 'It's going to be fair hell around here—what was that?'

The air seemed filled with the rush of something. The house quivered and vibrated, and they heard the thrumming of a mighty note of sound. The windows rattled. Two panes crashed; a draught of wind tore in, striking them and making them stagger. The door opposite banged shut, shattering

the latch. The white door-knob crumbled in fragments to the floor. The room's walls bulged like a gas balloon in the process of sudden inflation. Then came a new sound like the rattle of musketry, as the spray from a sea struck the wall of the house. Captain Lynch looked at his watch. It was four o'clock. He put on a coat of pilot cloth, unhooked the barometer, and stowed it away in a capacious pocket. Again a sea struck the house, with a heavy thud, and the light building tilted, twisted quarter-around on its foundations, and sank down, its floor at an angle of ten degrees.

Raoul went out first. The wind caught him and whirled him away. He noted that it had hauled around to the east. With a great effort he threw himself on the sand, crouching and holding his own. Captain Lynch, driven like a wisp of straw, sprawled over him. Two of the *Aorai's* sailors, leaving a coco-nut tree to which they had been clinging, came to their aid, leaning against the wind at impossible angles and fighting and clawing every inch of the way.

The old man's joints were stiff and he could not climb, so the sailors, by means of short ends of rope tied together, hoisted him up the trunk, a few feet at a time, till they could make him fast, at the top of the tree, fifty feet from the ground. Raoul passed his length of rope around the base of an adjacent tree and stood looking on. The wind was frightful. He had never dreamed it could blow so hard. A sea breached across the atoll, wetting him to the knees ere it subsided into the lagoon. The sun had disappeared, and a lead-coloured twilight settled down. A few drops of rain, driving horizontally, struck him. The impact was like that of leaden pellets. A splash of salt spray struck his face. It was like the slap of a man's hand. His cheeks stung, and involuntary tears of pain were in his smarting

eyes. Several hundred natives had taken to the trees, and he could have laughed at the bunches of human fruit clustering in the tops. Then, being Tahitian-born, he doubled his body at the waist, clasped the trunk of his tree with his hands, pressed the soles of his feet against the near surface of the trunk, and began to walk up the tree. At the top he found two women, two children, and a man. One little girl clasped a house-cat in her arms.

From his aerie he waved his hand to Captain Lynch, and that doughty patriarch waved back. Raoul was appalled at the sky. It had approached much nearer—in fact, it seemed just over his head; and it had turned from lead to black. Many people were still on the ground grouped about the bases of the trees and holding on. Several such clusters were praying, and in one the Mormon missionary was exhorting. A weird sound, rhythmical, faint as the faintest chirp of a far cricket, enduring but for a moment, but in that moment suggesting to him vaguely the thought of heaven and celestial music, came to his ear. He glanced about him and saw, at the base of another tree, a large cluster of people holding on by ropes and by one another. He could see their faces working and their lips moving in unison. No sound came to him, but he knew that they were singing hymns.

Still the wind continued to blow harder. By no conscious process could he measure it, for it had long since passed beyond all his experience of wind; but he knew somehow, nevertheless, that it was blowing harder. Not far away a tree was uprooted, flinging its load of human beings to the ground. A sea washed across the strip of sand, and they were gone. Things were happening quickly. He saw a brown shoulder and a black head silhouetted against the churning white of the lagoon. The next instant that, too, had vanished. Other trees were

going, falling and criss-crossing like matches. He was amazed at the power of the wind. His own tree was swaying perilously, one woman was wailing and clutching the little girl, who in turn still hung on to the cat.

The man, holding the other child, touched Raoul's arm and pointed. He looked and saw the Mormon church careering drunkenly a hundred feet away. It had been torn from its foundations, and wind and sea were heaving and shoving it toward the lagoon. A frightful wall of water caught it, tilted it, and flung it against half a dozen coconut trees. The bunches of human fruit fell like ripe coco-nuts. The subsiding wave showed them on the ground, some lying motionless, others squirming and writhing. They reminded him strangely of ants. He was not shocked. He had risen above horror. Quite as a matter of course he noted the succeeding wave sweep the sand clean of the human wreckage. A third wave, more colossal than any he had yet seen, hurled the church into the lagoon, where it floated off into the obscurity to leeward, half-submerged, reminding him for all the world of a Noah's ark.

He looked for Captain Lynch's house, and was surprised to find it gone. Things certainly were happening quickly. He noticed that many of the people in the trees that still held had descended to the ground. The wind had yet again increased. His own tree showed that. It no longer swayed or bent over and back. Instead, it remained practically stationary, curved in a rigid angle from the wind and merely vibrating. But the vibration was sickening. It was like that of a tuning-fork or the tongue of a jews' harp. It was the rapidity of the vibration that made it so bad. Even though its roots held, it could not stand the strain for long. Something would have to break.

Ah, there was one that had gone. He had not seen it go, but there it stood, the remnant, broken off half-way up the trunk. One did not know what happened unless he saw it. The mere crashing of trees and wails of human despair occupied no place in that mighty volume of sound. He chanced to be looking in Captain Lynch's direction when it happened. He saw the trunk of the tree, half-way up, splinter and part without noise. The head of the tree, with three sailors of the *Aorai* and the old captain, sailed off over the lagoon. It did not fall to the ground, but drove through the air like a piece of chaff. For a hundred yards he followed its flight, when it struck the water. He strained his eyes, and was sure that he saw Captain Lynch wave farewell.

Raoul did not wait for anything more. He touched the native and made signs to descend to the ground. The man was willing, but his women were paralysed from terror, and he elected to remain with them. Raoul passed his rope around the tree and slid down. A rush of salt water went over his head. He held his breath and clung desperately to the rope. The water subsided, and in the shelter of the trunk he breathed once more. He fastened the rope more securely, and then was put under by another sea. One of the women slid down and joined him, the native remaining by the other woman, the two children, and the cat.

The supercargo had noticed how the groups clinging at the bases of the other trees continually diminished. Now he saw the process work out alongside him. It required all his strength to hold on, and the woman who had joined him was growing weaker. Each time he emerged from a sea he was surprised to find the woman still there. At last he emerged to find himself alone. He looked up. The top of the tree had gone as well. At half its

original height, a splintered end vibrated. He was safe. The roots still held, while the tree had been shorn of its windage. He began to climb up. He was so weak that he went slowly, and sea after sea caught him before he was above them. Then he tied himself to the trunk and stiffened his soul to face the night and he knew not what.

He felt very lonely in the darkness. At times it seemed to him that it was the end of the world and that he was the last one left alive. Still the wind increased. Hour after hour it increased. By what he calculated was eleven o'clock the wind had become unbelievable. It was a horrible, monstrous thing, a screaming fury, a wall that smote and passed on, but that continued to smite and pass on—a wall without end. It seemed to him that he had become light and ethereal; that it was he that was in motion; that he was being driven with inconceivable velocity through unending solidness. The wind was no longer air in motion. It had become substantial as water or quicksilver. He had a feeling that he could reach into it and tear it out in chunks as one might do with the meat in the carcass of a steer; that he could seize hold of the wind and hang on to it as a man might hang on to the face of a cliff.

The wind strangled him. He could not face it and breathe, for it rushed in through his mouth and nostrils, distending his lungs like bladders. At such moments it seemed to him that his body was being packed and swollen with solid earth. Only by pressing his lips to the trunk of the tree could he breathe. Also, the ceaseless impact of the wind exhausted him. Body and brain became wearied. He no longer observed, no longer thought, and was but semi-conscious. One idea constituted his consciousness: So *this was a hurricane*. That one idea persisted irregularly. It was like a feeble flame that flickered occasionally. From a state of stupor he



would return to it—So *this was a hurricane*. Then he would go off into another stupor.

The height of the hurricane endured from eleven at night till three in the morning, and it was at eleven that the tree in which clung Mapuhi and his women snapped off. Mapuhi rose to the surface of the lagoon, still clutching his daughter Ngakura. Only a South Sea islander could have lived in such a driving smother. The pandanus tree, to which he attached himself, turned over and over in the froth and churn; and it was only by holding on at times and waiting, and at other times shifting his grips rapidly, that he was able to get his head and Ngakura's to the surface at intervals sufficiently near together to keep the breath in them. But the air was mostly water, what with flying spray and sheeted rain that poured along at right angles to the perpendicular.

It was ten miles across the lagoon to the farther ring of sand. Here, tossing tree-trunks, timbers, wrecks of cutters, and wreckage of houses, killed nine out of ten of the miserable beings who survived the passage of the lagoon. Half-drowned, exhausted, they were hurled into this mad mortar of the elements and battered into formless flesh. But Mapuhi was fortunate. His chance was the one in ten; it fell to him by the freakage of fate. He emerged upon the sand, bleeding from a score of wounds. Ngakura's left arm was broken; the fingers of her right hand were crushed; and cheek and forehead were laid open to the bone. He clutched a tree that yet stood, and clung on, holding the girl and sobbing for air, while the waters of the lagoon washed by knee-high and at times waist-high.

At three in the morning the backbone of the hurricane broke. By five no more than a stiff breeze was blowing. And by six it was dead calm and the sun

was shining. The sea had gone down. On the yet restless edge of the lagoon, Mapuhi saw the broken bodies of those that had failed in the landing. Undoubtedly Tefara and Nauri were among them. He went along the beach examining them, and came upon his wife, lying half in and half out of the water. He sat down and wept, making harsh animal-noises after the manner of primitive grief. Then she stirred uneasily, and groaned. He looked more closely. Not only was she alive, but she was uninjured. She was merely sleeping. Hers also had been the one chance in ten.

Of the twelve hundred alive the night before but three hundred remained. The Mormon missionary and a gendarme made the census. The lagoon was cluttered with corpses. Not a house nor a hut was standing. In the whole atoll not two stones remained one upon another. One in fifty of the coco-nut palms still stood, and they were wrecks, while on not one of them remained a single nut. There was no fresh water. The shallow wells that caught the surface seepage of the rain were filled with salt. Out of the lagoon a few soaked bags of flour were recovered. The survivors cut the hearts out of the fallen coco-nut trees and ate them. Here and there they crawled into tiny hutches, made by hollowing out the sand and covering over with fragments of metal roofing. The missionary made a crude still, but he could not distil water for three hundred persons. By the end of the second day, Raoul, taking a bath in the lagoon, discovered that his thirst was somewhat relieved. He cried out the news, and thereupon three hundred men, women, and children could have been seen, standing up to their necks in the lagoon and trying to drink water in through their skins. Their dead floated about them, or were stepped upon where they still lay upon the bottom. On the third day the people

buried their dead and sat down to wait for the rescue steamers.

In the meantime, Nauri, torn from her family by the hurricane, had been swept away on an adventure of her own. Clinging to a rough plank that wounded and bruised her and that filled her body with splinters, she was thrown clear over the atoll and carried away to sea. Here, under the amazing buffets of mountains of water, she lost her plank. She was an old woman nearly sixty; but she was Paumotan-born, and she had never been out of sight of the sea in her life. Swimming in the darkness, strangling, suffocating, fighting for air, she was struck a heavy blow on the shoulder by a coco-nut. On the instant her plan was formed, and she seized the nut. In the next hour she captured seven more. Tied together, they formed a life-buoy that preserved her life, while at the same time it threatened to pound her to a jelly. She was a fat woman, and she bruised easily; but she had had experience of hurricanes, and, while she prayed to her shark god for protection from sharks, she waited for the wind to break. But at three o'clock she was in such a stupor that she did not know. Nor did she know at six o'clock when the dead calm settled down. She was shocked into consciousness when she was thrown upon the sand. She dug in with raw and bleeding hands and feet and clawed against the backwash until she was beyond the reach of the waves.

She knew where she was. This land could be no other than the tiny islet of Takokota. It had no lagoon. No one lived upon it. Hikueru was fifteen miles away. She could not see Hikueru, but she knew that it lay to the south. The days went by, and she lived on the coco-nuts that had kept her afloat. They supplied her with drinking-water and with food. But she did not drink all she wanted, nor eat all she wanted. Rescue was problematical.

She saw the smoke of the rescue steamers on the horizon, but what steamer could be expected to come to lonely, uninhabited Takokota?

From the first she was tormented by corpses. The sea persisted in flinging them upon her bit of sand, and she persisted, until her strength failed, in thrusting them back into the sea where the sharks tore at them and devoured them. When her strength failed, the bodies festooned her beach with ghastly horror, and she withdrew from them as far as she could, which was not far.

By the tenth day her last coco-nut was gone, and she was shrivelling from thirst. She dragged herself along the sand, looking for coco-nuts. It was strange that so many bodies floated up, and no nuts. Surely there were more coco-nuts afloat than dead men! She gave up at last, and lay exhausted. The end had come. Nothing remained but to wait for death.

Coming out of a stupor, she became slowly aware that she was gazing at a patch of sandy-red hair on the head of a corpse. The sea flung the body toward her, then drew it back. It turned over, and she saw that it had no face. Yet there was something familiar about that patch of sandy-red hair. An hour passed. She did not exert herself to make the identification. She was waiting to die, and it mattered little to her what man that thing of horror once might have been.

But at the end of that hour she sat up slowly and stared at the corpse. An unusually large wave had thrown it beyond the reach of the lesser waves. Yes, she was right; that patch of red hair could belong to but one man in the Paumotus. It was Levy, the German Jew, the man who had bought the pearl and carried it away on the *Hira*. Well, one thing was evident; the *Hira* had been lost. The pearl-buyer's god of fishermen and thieves had gone back on him.

She crawled down to the dead man. His shirt had been torn away, and she could see the leather money-belt about his waist. She held her breath and tugged at the buckles. They gave easier than she had expected, and she crawled hurriedly away across the sand, dragging the belt after her. Pocket after pocket she unbuckled in the belt and found empty. Where could he have put it? In the last pocket of all she found it, the first and only pearl he had bought on the voyage. She crawled a few feet farther, to escape the pestilence of the belt, and examined the pearl. It was the one Mapuhi had found and been robbed of by Toriki. She weighed it in her hand and rolled it back and forth caressingly. But in it she saw no intrinsic beauty. What she did see was the house Mapuhi and Tefara and she had builded so carefully in their minds. Each time she looked at the pearl she saw the house in all its details, including the octagon-drop-clock on the wall. That was something to live for.

She tore a strip from her *ahu* and tied the pearl securely about her neck. Then she went on along the beach, panting and groaning, but resolutely seeking for coco-nuts. Quickly she found one, and, as she glanced around, a second. She broke one, drinking its water, which was mildewy, and eating the last particle of the meat. A little later she found a shattered dug-out. Its outrigger was gone, but she was hopeful, and, before the day was out, she found the outrigger. Every find was an augury. The pearl was a talisman. Late in the afternoon she saw a wooden box floating low in the water. When she dragged it out on the beach its contents rattled, and inside she found ten tins of salmon. She opened one by hammering it on the canoe. When a leak was started she drained the tin. After that she spent several hours in extracting the salmon, hammering and squeezing it out a morsel at a time.

Eight days longer she waited for rescue. In the meantime she fastened the outrigger back on the canoe, using for lashings all the coco-nut fibre she could find, and also what remained of her *ahu*. The canoe was badly cracked, and she could not make it water-tight; but a calabash made from a coco-nut she stored on board for a bailer. She was hard put for a paddle. With a piece of tin she sawed off all her hair close to the scalp. Out of the hair she braided a cord; and by means of the cord she lashed a three-foot piece of broom-handle to a board from the salmon case. She gnawed wedges with her teeth and with them wedged the lashing.

On the eighteenth day, at midnight, she launched the canoe through the surf and started back for Hikueru. She was an old woman. Hardship had stripped her fat from her till scarcely more than bones and skin and a few stringy muscles remained. The canoe was large and should have been paddled by three strong men. But she did it alone, with a makeshift paddle. Also, the canoe leaked badly, and one-third of her time was devoted to bailing. By clear daylight she looked vainly for Hikueru. Astern, Takokota had sunk beneath the sea-rim. The sun blazed down on her nakedness, compelling her body to surrender its moisture. Two tins of salmon were left, and in the course of the day she battered holes in them and drained the liquid. She had no time to waste in extracting the meat. A current was setting to the westward, she made westing whether she made southing or not.

In the early afternoon, standing upright in the canoe, she sighted Hikueru. Its wealth of coco-nut palms was gone. Only here and there, at wide intervals, could she see the ragged remnants of trees. The sight cheered her. She was nearer than she had thought. The current was setting her to the westward. She bore up against it and paddled on.

The wedges in the paddle-lashing worked loose, and she lost much time, at frequent intervals, in driving them tight. Then there was the bailing. One hour in three she had to cease paddling in order to bail. And all the time she drifted to the westward.

By sunset Hikuera bore south-east from her, three miles away. There was a full moon, and by eight o'clock the land was due east and two miles away. She struggled on for another hour, but the land was as far away as ever. She was in the main grip of the current; the canoe was too large; the paddle was too inadequate; and too much of her time and strength was wasted in bailing. Besides, she was very weak and growing weaker. Despite her efforts, the canoe was drifting off to the westward.

She breathed a prayer to her shark god, slipped over the side, and began to swim. She was actually refreshed by the water, and quickly left the canoe astern. At the end of an hour the land was perceptibly nearer. Then came her fright. Right before her eyes, not twenty feet away, a large fin cut the water. She swam steadily toward it, and slowly it glided away, curving off toward the right and circling around her. She kept her eyes on the fin and swam on. When the fin disappeared, she lay face downward on the water and watched. When the fin reappeared she resumed her swimming. The monster was lazy—she could see that. Without doubt he had been well fed since the hurricane. Had he been very hungry, she knew he would not have hesitated from making a dash for her. He was fifteen feet long, and one bite, she knew, could cut her in half.

But she did not have any time to waste on him. Whether she swam or not, the current drew away from the land just the same. A half-hour went by,

and the shark began to grow bolder. Seeing no harm in her he drew closer, in narrowing circles, cocking his eyes at her impudently as he slid past. Sooner or later, she knew well enough, he would get up sufficient courage to dash at her. She resolved to play first. It was a desperate act she meditated. She was an old woman, alone in the sea and weak from starvation and hardship; and yet she, in the face of this sea-tiger, must anticipate his dash by herself dashing at him. She swam on, waiting her chance. At last he passed languidly by, barely eight feet away. She rushed at him suddenly, feigning that she was attacking him. He gave a wild flirt of his tail as he fled away, and his sand-paper hide, striking her, took off her skin from elbow to shoulder. He swam rapidly, in a widening circle, and at last disappeared.

In the hole in the sand, covered over by fragments of metal roofing, Mapuhi and Tefara lay disputing.

‘If you had done as I said,’ charged Tefara, for the thousandth time, ‘and hidden the pearl and told no one, you would have it now.’

‘But Huru-Huru was with me when I opened the shell—have I not told you so times and times and times without end?’

‘And now we shall have no house. Raoul told me to-day that if you had not sold the pearl to Toriki——’

‘I did not sell it, Toriki robbed me.’

‘—— that if you had not sold the pearl, he would give you five thousand French dollars, which is ten thousand Chili.’

‘He has been talking to his mother,’ Mapuhi explained. ‘She has an eye for a pearl.’

‘And now the pearl is lost,’ Tefara complained.

‘It paid my debt with Toriki. That is twelve hundred I have made, anyway.’



'Toriki is dead,' she cried. 'They have heard no word of his schooner. She was lost along with the *Aorai* and the *Hira*. Will Toriki pay you the three hundred credit he promised? No, because Toriki is dead. And had you found no pearl, would you to-day owe Toriki the twelve hundred? No, because Toriki is dead, and you cannot pay dead men.'

'But Levy did not pay Toriki,' Mapuhi said. 'He gave him a piece of paper that was good for the money in Papeete; and now Levy is dead and cannot pay; and Toriki is dead and the paper lost with him, and the pearl is lost with Levy. You are right, Tefara. I have lost the pearl, and got nothing for it. Now let us sleep.'

He held up his hand suddenly and listened. From without came a noise, as of one who breathed heavily and with pain. A hand fumbled against the mat that served for a door.

'Who is there?' Mapuhi cried.

'Nauri,' came the answer. 'Can you tell me where is my son, Mapuhi?'

Tefara screamed and gripped her husband's arm.

'A ghost!' she chattered. 'A ghost!'

Mapuhi's face was a ghastly yellow. He clung weakly to his wife.

'Good woman,' he said in faltering tones, striving to disguise his voice. 'I know your son well. He is living on the east side of the lagoon.'

From without came the sound of a sigh. Mapuhi began to feel elated. He had fooled the ghost.

'But where do you come from, old woman?' he asked.

'From the sea,' was the dejected answer.

'I knew it! I knew it!' screamed Tefara, rocking to and fro.

'Since when has Tefara bedded in a strange house?' came Nauri's voice through the matting.

Mapuhi looked fear and reproach at his wife. It was her voice that had betrayed them.

'And since when has Mapuhi, my son, denied his old mother?' the voice went on.

'No, no, I have not—Mapuhi has not denied you,' he cried. 'I am not Mapuhi. He is on the east end of the lagoon I tell you.'

Ngakura sat up in bed and began to cry. The matting started to shake.

'What are you doing?' Mapuhi demanded.

'I am coming in,' said the voice of Nauri.

One end of the matting lifted. Tefara tried to dive under the blankets, but Mapuhi held on to her. He had to hold on to something. Together, struggling with each other, with shivering bodies and chattering teeth, they gazed with protruding eyes at the lifting mat. They saw Nauri, dripping with sea-water, without her *ahu*, creep in. They rolled over backward from her and fought for Ngakura's blanket with which to cover their heads.

'You might give your old mother a drink of water,' the ghost said plaintively.

'Give her a drink of water,' Tefara commanded in a shaking voice.

'Give her a drink of water,' Mapuhi passed on the command to Ngakura.

And together they kicked out Ngakura from under the blanket. A minute later, peeping, Mapuhi saw the ghost drinking. When it reached out a shaking hand and laid it on his, he felt the weight of it and was convinced that it was no ghost. Then he emerged, dragging Tefara after him, and in a few minutes all were listening to Nauri's tale. And when she told of Levy, and dropped the pearl into Tefara's hand, even she was reconciled to the reality of her mother-in-law.

'In the morning,' said Tefara, 'you will sell the pearl to Raoul for five thousand French.'

‘ The house? ’ objected Nauri.

‘ He will build the house,’ Tefara answered. ‘ He says it will cost four thousand French. Also will he give one thousand French in credit, which is two thousand Chili.’

‘ And it will be six fathoms long? ’ Nauri queried.

‘ Ay,’ answered Mapuhi, ‘ six fathoms.’

‘ And in the middle room will be the octagon-drop-clock? ’

‘ Ay, and the round table as well.’

‘ Then give me something to eat, for I am hungry,’ said Nauri, complacently. ‘ And after that we will sleep, for I am weary. And to-morrow we will have more talk about the house before we sell the pearl. It will be better if we take the thousand French in cash. Money is ever better than credit in buying goods from the traders.’

## JOHN RUSSELL

(B. 1885)

### THE FOURTH MAN

THE raft might have been taken for a swath of cut sedge or a drifting tangle of roots as it slid out of the shadowy river-mouth at dawn and dipped into the first ground-swell. But while the sky brightened and the breeze came fresh offshore it picked a way among shoals and swampy islets with purpose and direction, and when at last the sun leaped up and cleared his bright eye of the morning mist it had passed the wide entrance to the bay and stood to open sea.

It was a curious craft for such a venture, of a type that survives here and there in the obscure corners of the world. The coracle maker would have scorned it. The first navigating pithecanthrope built nearly as well with his log and bush. A mat of pandanus leaves served for its sail and a paddle of niaouli wood for its helm. But it had a single point of real seaworthiness. Its twin floats, paired as a catamaran, were woven of reed bundles and bamboo sticks upon triple rows of bladders. It was light as a bladder itself, elastic, fit to ride any weather. One other quality this raft possessed which recommended it beyond all comfort and all safety to its present crew. It was very nearly invisible. They had only to unstep its mast and lie flat in the cup of its soggy platform and they could not be spied half a mile away.

Four men occupied the raft. Three of them were white. Their bodies had been scored with brambles and blackened with dried blood, and on wrist and

ankle they bore the dark and wrinkled stain of the gyves. The hair upon them was long and matted. They wore only the rags of blue canvas uniforms. But they were whites, members of the superior race—members of a highly superior race according to those philosophers who rate the criminal aberration as a form of genius.

The fourth was the man who had built the raft and was now sailing it. There was nothing superior about him. His skin was a layer of soot. His prognathous jaw carried out the angle of a low forehead. No line of beauty redeemed his lean limbs and knobby joints. Nature had set upon him her plainest stamp of inferiority, and his only attempts to relieve it were the twist of bark about his middle and the prong of pig ivory through the cartilage of his nose. Altogether a very ordinary specimen of one of the lowest branches of the human family—the Canaques of New Caledonia.

The three whites sat together well forward, and so they had sat in silence for hours. But at sunrise, as if some spell had been raised by the clang of that great copper gong in the east, they stirred and breathed deep of the salt air and looked at one another with hope in their haggard faces, and then back toward the land which was now no more than a grey-green smudge behind them. . . . 'Friends,' said the eldest, whose temples were bound with a scrap of crimson scarf, 'Friends—the thing is done.'

With a gesture like conjuring he produced from the breast of his tattered blouse three cigarettes, fresh and round, and offered them.

'Nippers!' cried the one at his right. 'True nippers—name of a little good man! And here? Doctor, I always said you were a marvel. See if they be not new from the box!'

Dr. Dubosc smiled. Those who had known him in very different circumstances about the boulevards, the lobbies, the clubs, would have known him again and in spite of all disfigurement by that smile. And here, at the bottom of the earth, it had set him still apart in the prisons, the cobalt mines, the chain gangs of a community not much given to mirth. Many a crowded lecture hall at Montpellier had seen him touch some intellectual firework with just such a twinkle behind his bristly grey brows, with just such a thin curl of lip.

‘By way of celebration,’ he explained. ‘Consider. There are seventy-five evasions from Nouméa every six months, of which not more than one succeeds. I had the figures myself from Dr. Pierre at the infirmary. He is not much of a physician, but a very honest fellow. Could anybody win on that percentage without dissipating? I ask you.’

‘Therefore you prepared for this?’

‘It is now three weeks since I bribed the night guard to get these same nippers.’

The other regarded him with admiration. Sentiment came readily upon this beardless face, tender and languid, but overdrawn, with eyes too large and soft, and oval too long. It was one of those faces familiar enough to the police which might serve as model for an angel were it not associated with some revolting piece of devilry. Fenayrou himself had been condemned ‘to perpetuity’ as an incorrigible.

‘Is not our doctor a wonder?’ he inquired as he handed a cigarette along to the third white man. ‘He thinks of everything. You should be ashamed to grumble. See—we are free, after all. Free!’

The third was a gross, pock-marked man with hairless lids, known sometimes as Niniche, Trois Huit, Le Tordeur, but chiefly among copains as Perroquet—a name derived perhaps from his beaked nose, or from some perception of his jailbird

character. He was a garrotter by profession, accustomed to rely upon his fists only for the exchange of amenities. Dubosc might indulge a fancy and Fenayrou seek to carry it as a pose, but The Parrot remained a gentleman of strictly serious turn. There is perhaps a tribute to the practical spirit of penal administration in the fact that while Dubosc was the most dangerous of these three and Fenayrou the most depraved Perroquet was the one with the official reputation, whose escape would be signalled first among the 'Wanted'. He accepted the cigarette because he was glad to get it, but he said nothing until Dubosc passed a tin box of matches and the first gulp of picadura filled his lungs. . . .

'Wait till you've got your two feet on a pave, my boy. That will be the time to talk of freedom. What? Suppose there came a storm.'

'It is not the season of storms,' observed Dubosc.

But The Parrot's word had given them a check. Such spirits as these, to whom the land had been a horror, would be slow to feel the terror of the sea. Back there they had left the festering limbo of a convict colony, oblivion. Out here they had reached the rosy threshold of the big round world again. They were men raised from the dead, charged with all the furious appetites of lost years, with the savour of life, strong and sweet on their lips. And yet they paused and looked about in quickened perception, with the clutch at the throat that takes the landsman on big waters. The spaces were so wide and empty. The voices in their ears were so strange and murmurous. There was a threat in each wave that came from the depths, a sinister vibration. None of them knew the sea. None knew its ways, what tricks it might play, what traps it might spread—more deadly than those of the jungle.

The raft was running now before a brisk chop

with alternate spring and wallow, while the froth bubbled in over the prow and ran down among them as they sat. 'Where is that cursed ship that was to meet us here?' demanded Fenayrou.

'It will meet us right enough.' Dubosc spoke carelessly, though behind the blown wisp of his cigarette he had been searching the outer horizon with keen glance. 'This is the day, as agreed. We will be picked up off the mouth of the river.'

'You say,' growled Perroquet. 'But where is any river now? Or any mouth? Sacred name, this wind will blow us to China if we keep on.'

'We dare not lie in any closer. There is a Government launch at Torrien. Also the traders go armed hereabouts, ready for chaps like us. And don't imagine that the native trackers have given us up. They are likely to be following still in their proas.'

'So far!'

Fenayrou laughed, for The Parrot's dread of their savage enemies had a morbid tinge.

'Take care, Perroquet. They will eat you yet.'

'Is it true?' demanded the other, appealing to Dubosc. 'I have heard it is even permitted these devils to keep all runaways they can capture—Name of God!—to fatten on.'

'An idle tale,' smiled Dubosc. 'They prefer the reward. But one hears of convicts being badly mauled. There was a forester who made a break from Baie du Sud and came back lacking an arm. Certainly these people have not lost the habit of cannibalism.'

'Piecemeal,' chuckled Fenayrou. 'They will only sample you, Perroquet. Let them make a stew of your brains. You would miss nothing.'

But The Parrot swore.

'Name of a name—what brutes!' he said, and by a gesture recalled the presence of that fourth man who was of their party and yet so completely



separated from them that they had almost forgotten him.

The Canaque was steering the raft. He sat crouched at the stern, his body glistening like varnished ebony with spray. He held the steering paddle, immobile as an image, his eyes fixed upon the course ahead. There was no trace of expression on his face, no hint of what he thought or felt or whether he thought or felt anything. He seemed not even aware of their regard, and each one of them experienced somehow that twinge of uneasiness with which the white confronts his brother of colour—this enigma brown or yellow or black he is fated never wholly to understand or to fathom. . . .

‘It occurs to me,’ said Fenayrou, in a pause, ‘that our friend here who looks like a shiny boot is able to steer us God knows where. Perhaps to claim the reward.’

‘Reassure yourself,’ answered Dubosc. ‘He steers by my order. Besides, it is a simple creature—an infant, truly, incapable of any but the most primitive reasoning.’

‘Is he incapable of treachery?’

‘Of any that would deceive us. Also, he is bound by his duty. I made my bargain with his chief, up the river, and this one is sent to deliver us on board our ship. It is the only interest he has in us.’

‘And he will do it?’

‘He will do it. Such is the nature of the native.’

‘I am glad you feel so,’ returned Fenayrou, adjusting himself indolently among the drier reeds and nursing the last of his cigarette. ‘For my part I wouldn’t trust a figurehead like that for two sous. Mazette! What a monkey face!’

‘Brute!’ repeated Perroquet, and this man, sprung from some vile river-front slum of Argenteuil, whose home had been the dock pilings, the

grog shop, and the jail, even this man viewed the black Canaque from an immeasurable distance with the look of hatred and contempt. . . .

Under the heat of the day the two younger convicts lapsed presently into dozing. But Dubosc did not doze. His tormented soul peered out behind its mask as he stood to sweep the skyline again under shaded hand. His theory had been so precise, the fact was so different. He had counted absolutely on meeting the ship—some small schooner, one of those flitting, half-piratical traders of the copra islands that can be hired like cabs in a dark street for any questionable enterprise. Now there was no ship, and here was no cross-roads where one might sit and wait. Such a craft as the catamaran could not be made to lie to.

The doctor foresaw ugly complications for which he had not prepared and whereof he must bear the burden. The escape had been his own conception, directed by him from the start. He had picked his companions deliberately from the whole forced labour squad, Perroquet for his great strength, Fenayrou as a ready echo. He had made it plain since their first dash from the mine, during their skirmish with the military guards, their subsequent wanderings in the brush with bloodhounds and trackers on the trail—through every crisis—that he alone should be the leader.

For the others, they had understood well enough which of their number was the chief beneficiary. Those mysterious friends on the outside that were reaching half around the world to further their release had never heard of such individuals as Fenayrou and The Parrot. Dubosc was the man who had pulled the wires: that brilliant physician whose conviction for murder had followed so sensationally, so scandalously, upon his sweep of academic and social honours. There would be

clacking tongues in many a Parisian salon, and white faces in some, when news should come of his escape. Ah, yes, for example, they knew the high-flyer of the band, and they submitted—so long as he led them to victory. They submitted, while reserving a depth of jealousy, the inevitable remnant of caste persisting still in this democracy of stripes and shame.

By the middle of the afternoon the doctor had taken certain necessary measures.

‘Ho!’ said Fenayrou sleepily. ‘Behold our colours at the mast-head. What is that for, comrade?’

The sail had been lowered and in its place streamed the scrap of crimson scarf that had served Dubosc as a turban.

‘To help them sight us when the ship comes.’

‘What wisdom!’ cried Fenayrou. ‘Always he thinks of everything, our doctor: everything——’

He stopped with the phrase on his lips, and his hand outstretched toward the centre of the platform. Here, in a damp depression among the reeds, had lain the wicker-covered bottle of green glass in which they carried their water. It was gone.

‘Where is that flask?’ he demanded. ‘The sun has grilled me like a bone.’

‘You will have to grill some more,’ said Dubosc grimly. ‘This crew is put on rations.’

Fenayrou stared at him wide-eyed, and from the shadow of a folded mat The Parrot thrust his purpled face. ‘What do you sing me there? Where is that water?’

‘I have it,’ said Dubosc.

They saw, in fact, that he held the flask between his knees, along with their single packet of food in its wrapping of coco-nut husk.

‘I want a drink,’ challenged Perroquet.

‘Reflect a little. We must guard our supplies like

reasonable men. One does not know how long we may be floating here. . . .’

Fell a silence among them, heavy and strained, in which they heard only the squeaking of frail basket-work as their raft laboured in the wash. Slow as was their progress, they were being pushed steadily outward and onward, and the last cliffs of New Caledonia were no longer even a smudge in the west, but only a hazy line. And still they had seen no moving thing upon the great round breast of the sea that gleamed in its corselet of brass plates under a brazen sun. ‘So that is the way you talk now?’ began The Parrot, half choking. ‘You do not know how long? But you were sure enough when we started.’

‘I am still sure,’ returned Dubosc. ‘The ship will come. Only she cannot stay for us in one spot. She will be cruising to and fro until she intercepts us. We must wait.’

‘Ah, good! We must wait. And in the meantime, what? Fry here in the sacred heat with our tongues hanging out while you deal us drop by drop—hein?’

‘Perhaps.’

‘But no!’ The garrotter clenched his hands. ‘Blood of God, there is no man big enough to feed me with a spoon!’

Fenayrou’s chuckle came pat, as it had more than once, and Dubosc shrugged.

‘You laugh!’ cried Perroquet, turning in fury. ‘But how about this lascar of a captain that lets us put to sea unprovided? What? He thinks of everything, does he? He thinks of everything! . . . Sacred farceur—let me hear you laugh again!’

Somehow Fenayrou was not so minded.

‘And now he bids us be reasonable,’ concluded The Parrot. ‘Tell that to the devils in hell. You and your cigarettes, too. Bah—comedian!’

'It is true,' muttered Fenayrou, frowning. 'A bad piece of work for a captain of runaways.'

But the doctor faced mutiny with his thin smile.

'All this alters nothing. Unless we would die very speedily, we must guard our water.'

'By whose fault?'

'Mine,' acknowledged the doctor. 'I admit it. What then? We can't turn back. Here we are. Here we must stay. We can only do our best with what we have.'

'I want a drink,' repeated The Parrot, whose throat was afire since he had been denied.

'You can claim your share, of course. But take warning of one thing. After it is gone do not think to sponge on us—on Fenayrou and me.'

'He would be capable of it, the pig!' exclaimed Fenayrou, to whom this thrust had been directed. 'I know him. See here, my old, the doctor is right. Fair for one, fair for all.'

'I want a drink.'

Dubosc removed the wooden plug from the flask.

'Very well,' he said quietly.

With the delicacy that lent something of leger-demain to all his gestures, he took out a small canvas wallet, the crude equivalent of the professional black bag, from which he drew a thimble. Meticulously he poured a brimming measure, and Fenayrou gave a shout at the grumbler's fallen jaw as he accepted that tiny cup between his big fingers. Dubosc served Fenayrou and himself with the same amount before he recorked the bottle.

'In this manner we should have enough to last us three days—maybe more—with equal shares among the three of us. . . .'

Such was his summing of the demonstration, and it passed without comment, as a matter of course in the premisses, that he should count as he

did—ignoring that other who sat alone at the stern of the raft, the black Canaque, the fourth man.

Perroquet had been outmanœuvred, but he listened sullenly while for the hundredth time Dubosc recited his easy and definite plan for their rescue, as arranged with his secret correspondents.

‘That sounds very well,’ observed The Parrot, at last. ‘But what if these jokers only mock themselves of you? What if they have counted it good riddance to let you rot here? And us? Sacred name, that would be a famous jest! To let us wait for a ship and they have no ship!’

‘Perhaps the doctor knows better than we how sure a source he counts upon,’ suggested Fenayrou slyly.

‘That is so,’ said Dubosc, with great good humour. ‘My faith, it would not be well for them to fail me. Figure to yourselves that there is a safety vault in Paris full of papers to be opened at my death. Certain friends of mine could hardly afford to have some little confessions published that would be found there. . . . Such a tale as this, for instance——’

And to amuse them he told an indecent anecdote of high life, true or fictitious, it mattered nothing, so he could make Fenayrou’s eyes glitter and The Parrot growl in wonder. Therein lay his means of ascendancy over such men, the knack of eloquence and vision. Harried, worn, oppressed by fears that he could sense so much more sharply than they, he must expend himself now in vulgar marvels to distract these ruder minds. He succeeded so far that when the wind fell at sunset they were almost cheerful, ready to believe that the morning would bring relief. They dined on dry biscuit and another thimbleful of water apiece and took watch by amiable agreement. And through that long, clear night of stars, whenever the one of the three who

kept awake between his comrades chanced to look aft, he could see the vague blot of another figure—the naked Canaque, who slumbered there apart. . . .

It was an evil dawning. Fenayrou, on the morning trick, was aroused by a foot as hard as a hoof, and started up at Perroquet's wrathful face, with the doctor's graver glance behind.

'Idler! Good-for-nothing! Will you wake at least before I smash your ribs? Name of God, here is a way to stand watch!'

'Keep off!' cried Fenayrou wildly. 'Keep off. Don't touch me!'

'Eh, and why not, fool? Do you know that the ship could have missed us? A ship could have passed us a dozen times while you slept?'

'Bourrique!'

'Vache!'

They spat the insults of the prison while Perroquet knotted his great fist over the other, who crouched away catlike, his mobile mouth twisted to a snarl. Dubosc stood aside in watchful calculation until against the angry red sunrise in which they floated there flashed the naked red gleam of steel. Then he stepped between.

'Enough. Fenayrou, put up that knife.'

'The dog kicked me!'

'You were at fault,' said Dubosc sternly. 'Perroquet!'

'Are we all to die that he may sleep?' stormed The Parrot.

'The harm is done. Listen now, both of you. Things are bad enough already. We may need all our energies. Look about.'

They looked and saw the far, round horizon and the empty desert of the sea and their own long shadows that slipped slowly before them over its smooth, slow heaving, and nothing else. The land

had sunk away from them in the night—some one of the chance currents that sweep among the islands had drawn them none could say where or how far. The trap had been sprung. ‘ Good God, how lonely it is ! ’ breathed Fenayrou in a hush.

No more was said. They dropped their quarrel. Silently they shared their rations as before, made shift to eat something with their few drops of water, and sat down to pit themselves one against another in the vital struggle that each could feel was coming—a sort of tacit test of endurance.

A calm had fallen, as it does between trades in this flawed belt, an absolute calm. The air hung weighted. The sea showed no faintest crinkle, only the maddening, unresting heave and fall in polished undulations on which the lances of the sun broke and drove in under their eyelids as white, hot splinters ; a savage sun that kindled upon them with the power of a burning glass, that sucked the moisture from poor human bits of jelly and sent them crawling to the shelter of their mats and brought them out again, gasping, to shrivel anew. The water, the world of water, seemed sleek and thick as oil. They came to loathe it and the rotting smell of it, and when the doctor made them dip themselves overside they found little comfort. It was warm, sluggish, slimed. But a curious thing resulted. . . .

While they clung along the edge of the raft they all faced inboard, and there sat the black Canaque. He did not join them. He did not glance at them. He sat hunkered on his heels in the way of the native, with arms hugging his knees. He stayed in his place at the stern, motionless under that shattering sun, gazing out into vacancy. Whenever they raised their eyes they saw him. He was the only thing to see.

‘ Here is one who appears to enjoy himself quite well,’ remarked Dubosc.



'I was thinking so myself,' said Fenayrou.

'The animal!' rumbled Perroquet.

They observed him, and for the first time with direct interest, with thought of him as a fellow being—with the beginning of envy.

'He does not seem to suffer.'

'What is going on in his brain? What does he dream of there? One would say he despises us.'

'The beast!'

'Perhaps he is waiting for us to die,' suggested Fenayrou with a harsh chuckle. 'Perhaps he is waiting for the reward. He would not starve on the way home, at least. And he could deliver us—piecemeal.'

They studied him.

'How does he do it, doctor? Has he no feeling?'

'I have been wondering,' said Dubosc. 'It may be that his fibres are tougher—his nerves.'

'Yet we have had water and he none.'

'But look at his skin, fresh and moist.'

'And his belly, fat as a football!'

The Parrot hauled himself aboard.

'Don't tell me this black beast knows thirst!' he cried with a strange excitement. 'Is there any way he could steal our supplies?'

'Certainly not.'

'Then, name of a dog, what if he has supplies of his own hidden about?'

The same monstrous notion struck them all, and the others swarmed to help. They knocked the black aside. They searched the platform where he had sat, burrowing among the rushes, seeking some secret cache, another bottle or a gourd. They found nothing.

'We were mistaken,' said Dubosc.

But Perroquet had a different expression for disappointment. He turned on the Canaque and caught him by the kinky mop of the hair and

proceeded to give him what is known as gruel in the cobalt mines. This was a little speciality of The Parrot's. He paused only when he himself was breathless and exhausted and threw the limp, unresisting body from him.

'There, lump of dirt! That will teach you. Maybe you're not so chipper now, my boy—hein? Not quite so satisfied with your luck. Pig! That will make you feel. . . .'

It was a ludicrous, a wanton, a witless thing. But the others said nothing. The learned Dubosc made no protest. Fenayrou had none of his usual jests at the garrotter's stupidity. They looked on as at the satisfaction of a common grudge. The white trampled the black with or without cause, and that was natural. And the black crept away into his place with his hurts and his wrongs and made no sign and struck no blow. And that was natural too.

The sun declined into a blazing furnace whereof the gates stood wide, and they prayed to hasten it and cursed because it hung enchanted. But when it was gone their blistered bodies still held the heat like things incandescent. The night closed down over them like a purple bow, glazed and impermeable. They would have divided the watches again, though none of them thought of sleep, but Fenayrou made a discovery.

'Idiots!' he rasped. 'Why should we look and look? A whole navy of ships cannot help us now. If we are becalmed, why so are they!'

The Parrot was singularly put out.

'Is this true?' he asked Dubosc.

'Yes, we must hope for a breeze first.'

'Then, name of God, why didn't you tell us so? Why did you keep on playing out the farce?'

He pondered it for a time. 'See here,' he said. 'You are wise, eh? You are very wise. You know things we do not and you keep them to yourself.'

He leaned forward to peer into the doctor's face. 'Very good. But if you think you're going to use that cursed smartness to get the best of us in any way—see here, my zig, I pull your gullet out like the string of an orange. . . . Like that. What ?'

Fenayrou gave a nervous giggle and Dubosc shrugged, but it was perhaps about this time that he began to regret his intervention in the knife play.

For there was no breeze and there was no ship.

By the third morning each had sunk within himself, away from the rest. The doctor was lost in a profound depression, Perroquet in dark suspicion, and Fenayrou in bodily suffering, which he supported ill. Only two effective ties still bound their confederacy. One was the flask which Dubosc had slung at his side by a strip of the wickerwork. Every move he made with it, every drop he poured, was followed by burning eyes. And he knew, and he had no advantage of them in knowing, that the will to live was working its relentless formula aboard that raft. Under his careful saving there still remained nearly half of their original store.

The other bond, as it had come to be by strange mutation, was the presence of the black Canaque.

There was no forgetting the fourth man now, no overlooking of him. He loomed upon their consciousness, more formidable, more mysterious, more exasperating with every hour. Their own powers were ebbing. The naked savage had yet to give the slightest sign of complaint or weakness.

During the night he had stretched himself out on the platform as before, and after a time he had slept. Through the hours of darkness and silence, while each of the whites wrestled with despair, this black man had slept as placidly as a child, with easy, regular breathing. Since then he had resumed his

place aft. And so he remained, unchanged, a fixed fact and a growing wonder.

The brutal rage of Perroquet, in which he had vented his distorted hate of the native, had been followed by superstitious doubts.

‘ Doctor,’ he said at last, in awed huskiness, ‘ is this a man or a fiend? ’

‘ It is a man.’

‘ A miracle,’ put in Fenayrou.

But the doctor lifted a finger in a way his pupils would have remembered:

‘ It is a man,’ he repeated, ‘ and a very poor and wretched example of a man. You will find no lower type anywhere. Observe his cranial angle, the high ears, the heavy bones of his skull. He is scarcely above the ape. There are educated apes more intelligent.’

‘ Ah! Then what? ’

‘ He has a secret,’ said the doctor.

That was a word to transfix them.

‘ A secret! But we see him—every move he makes, every instant. What chance for a secret? ’

The doctor rather forgot his audience, betrayed by chagrin and bitterness.

‘ How pitiful! ’ he mused. ‘ Here are we three—children of the century, products of civilization—I fancy none would deny that, at least. And here is this man who belongs before the Stone Age. In a set trial of fitness, of wits, of resource, is he to win? Pitiful! ’

‘ What kind of secret? ’ demanded Perroquet fuming.

‘ I cannot say,’ admitted Dubosc, with a baffled gesture. ‘ Possibly some method of breathing, some peculiar posture that operates to cheat the sensations of the body. Such things are known among primitive peoples—known and carefully guarded—like the properties of certain drugs, the uses of hypno-

tism and complex natural laws. Then, again, it may be psychologic—a mental attitude persistently held. Who knows? . . .

‘To ask him? Useless. He will not tell. Why should he? We scorn him. We give him no share with us. We abuse him. He simply falls back on his own expedients. He simply remains inscrutable—as he has always been and will always be. He never tells those innermost secrets. They are the means by which he has survived from the depth of time, by which he may yet survive when all our wisdom is dust.’

‘I know several very excellent ways of learning secrets,’ said Fenayrou as he passed his dry tongue over his lips. ‘Shall I begin?’

Dubosc came back with a start and looked at him.

‘It would be useless. He could stand any torture you could invent. No, that is not the way.’

‘Listen to mine,’ said Perroquet, with sudden violence. ‘Me, I am wearied of the gab. You say he is a man? Very well. If he is a man, he must have blood in his veins. That would be, anyway, good to drink.’

‘No,’ returned Dubosc. ‘It would be hot. Also it would be salt. For food—perhaps. But we do not need food.’

‘Kill the animal, then, and throw him over!’

‘We gain nothing.’

‘Well, sacred name, what do you want?’

‘To beat him!’ cried the doctor, curiously agitated. ‘To beat him at the game—that’s what I want! For our own sakes, for our racial pride, we must, we must. To outlast him, to prove ourselves his masters. By better brain, by better organization and control. Watch him, watch him, friends—that we may ensnare him, that we may detect and defeat him in the end!’

But the doctor was miles beyond them.

'Watch?' growled The Parrot. 'I believe you, old windbag. It is all one watch. I sleep no more and leave any man alone with that bottle.'

To this the issue finally sharpened. Such craving among such men could not be stayed much longer by dribblets. They watched. They watched the Canaque. They watched each other. And they watched the falling level in their flask—until the tension gave.

Another dawn upon the same dead calm, rising like a conflagration through the puddled air, cloudless, hopeless! Another day of blinding, slow-drawn agony to meet. And Dubosc announced that their allowance must be cut to half a thimbleful.

There remained perhaps a quarter of a litre—a miserable reprieve of bare life among the three of them, but one good swallow for a yearning throat.

At sight of the bottle, at the tinkle of its limpid contents, so cool and silvery green inside the glass, Fenayrou's nerve snapped. . . .

'More!' he begged, with pleading hands. 'I die More!'

When the doctor refused him he grovelled among the reeds, then rose suddenly to his knees and tossed his arms abroad with a hoarse cry:

'A ship! A ship!'

The others spun about. They saw the thin unbroken ring of this greater and more terrible prison to which they had exchanged: and that was all they saw, though they stared and stared. They turned back to Fenayrou and found him in the act of tilting the bottle. A cunning slash of his knife had loosed it from its sling at the doctor's side. . . . Even now he was sucking at the mouth, spilling the precious liquid—

With the one sweep Perroquet caught up their paddle and flattened him, crushed him.

Springing across the prostrate man, Dubosc

snatched the flask upright and put the width of the raft between himself and the big garrotter who stood wide-legged, his bloodshot eyes alight, rumbling in his chest.

‘There is no ship,’ said The Parrot. ‘There will be no ship. We are done. Because of you and your rotten promises that brought us here—doctor, liar, ass!’

Dubosc stood firm.

‘Come a step nearer and I break bottle and all over your head.’

They stood regarding each other, and Perroquet’s brows gathered in a slow effort of thought.

‘Consider,’ urged Dubosc with his quaint touch of pedantry. ‘Why should you and I fight? We are rational men. We can see this trouble through and win yet. Such weather cannot last for ever. Besides, here are only two of us to divide the water now.’

‘That is true,’ nodded The Parrot. ‘That is true, isn’t it? Fenayrou kindly leaves us his share. An inheritance—what? A famous idea. I’ll take mine now.’

Dubosc probed him keenly.

‘My share, at once, if you please,’ insisted Perroquet, with heavy docility. ‘Afterward, we shall see. Afterward.’

The doctor smiled his grim and wan little smile.

‘So be it.’

Without relinquishing the flask he brought out his canvas wallet once more—that wallet which replaced the professional black bag—and rolled out the thimble by some swift sleight of his flexible fingers while he held Perroquet’s glance with his own.

‘I will measure it for you.’

He poured the thimbleful and handed it over quickly, and when Perroquet had tossed it off he filled again and again.

‘Four—five,’ he counted. ‘That is enough.’

But The Parrot’s big grip closed quietly around his wrist at the last offering and pinioned him and held him helpless.

‘No, it is not enough. Now I will take the rest. Ha, wise man! Have I fooled you at last?’

There was no chance to struggle, and Dubosc did not try, only stayed smiling up at him, waiting.

Perroquet took the bottle.

‘The best man wins,’ he remarked. ‘Eh, my zig? A bright notion—of yours. The—best—’

His lips moved, but no sound issued. A look of the most intense surprise spread upon his round face. He stood swaying a moment, and collapsed like a huge hinged toy when the string is cut.

Dubosc stooped and caught the bottle again, looking down at his big adversary, who sprawled in brief convulsion and lay still, a bluish scum oozing between his teeth. . . .

‘Yes, the best man wins,’ repeated the doctor, and laughed as he in turn raised the flask for a draught.

‘The best wins!’ echoed a voice in his ear.

Fenayrou, writhing up and striking like a wounded snake, drove the knife home between his shoulders.

The bottle fell and rolled to the middle of the platform, and there, while each strove vainly to reach it, it poured out its treasure in a tiny stream that trickled away and was lost.

It may have been minutes or hours later—for time has no count in emptiness—when next a sound proceeded from that frail slip of a raft, hung like a mote between sea and sky. It was a phrase of song, a wandering strain in half tones and fluted accidentals, not unmelodious. The black Canaque was singing. He sang without emotion or effort,



quite casually and softly to himself. So he might sing by his forest hut to ease some hour of idleness. Claspings his knees and gazing out into space, untroubled, unmoved, enigmatic to the end, he sang—he sang.

And after all, the ship came.

She came in a manner befitting the sauciest little tops'l schooner between Nukahiva and the Pelews—as her owner often averred and none but the envious denied—in a manner worthy, too, of that able Captain Jean Guibert, the merriest little scamp that ever cleaned a pearl bank or snapped a cargo of labour from a scowling coast. Before the first whiff out of the west came the *Petite Susanne*, curtsying and skipping along with a flash of white frill by her forefoot, and brought up startled and stood shaking her skirts and keeping herself quite daintily to windward.

‘And ’ere they are sure enough, by dam’!’ said the polyglot Captain Jean in the language of commerce and profanity. ‘Zose passengers for us, hey? They been here all the time, not ten mile off—I bet you, Marteau. Ain’t it ’ell? What you zink, my gar?’

His second, a tall and excessively bony individual of gloomy outlook, handed back the glasses.

‘More bad luck. I never approved of this job. And now—see?—we have had our voyage for nothing. What misfortune!’

‘Marteau, if that good Saint Pierre gives you some day a gold ’arp still you would holler bad luck—bad job!’ retorted Captain Jean. ‘Do I ’ire you to stand zere and cry about ze luck? Get a boat over, and quicker zan zat!’

M. Marteau aroused himself sufficiently to take command of the boat’s crew that presently dropped away to investigate. . . .

‘It is even as I thought,’ he called up from the

quarter when he returned with his report. 'I told you how it would be, Captain Jean.'

'Hey?' cried the captain, bouncing at the rail. 'Have you got zose passengers yet, *enfant de salaud*?'

'I have not,' said Marteau in the tone of lugubrious triumph. 'There was nothing in the world that could have pleased him quite so much as this chance to prove Captain Jean the loser on a venture. 'We are too late. Bad luck, bad luck—that calm. What misfortune! They are all dead!'

'Will you mind your business?' shouted the skipper.

'But still, the gentlemen are dead——'

'What is zat to me? All ze better, they will cost nozing to feed.'

'But how——'

'Hogsheads, my gar,' said Captain Jean paternally. 'Zose hogsheads in the afterhold. Fill them nicely with brine, and zere we are!' And, having drawn all possible satisfaction from the other's amazement, he sprang the nub of his joke with a grin. 'Ze gentlemen's passage is all paid, Marteau. Before we left Sydney, Marteau. I contrac' to bring back three escape' convicts, and so by 'ell I do—in pickle! And now if you'll kindly get zose passengers aboard like I said an' bozzer less about ze goddam luck, I be much oblige'. Also, zere is no green on my eye, Marteau, and you can dam' well smoke it!'

Marteau recovered himself with difficulty in time to recall another trifling detail. 'There is a fourth man on board that raft, Captain Jean. He is a Canaque—still alive. What shall we do with him?'

'A Canaque?' snapped Captain Jean. 'A Canaque! I have no word in my contrac' about any Canaque. . . . Leave him zere. . . . He is only a dam' nigger. He'll do well enough where he is.'

And Captain Jean was right, perfectly right, for while the *Petite Susanne* was taking aboard her grisly cargo the wind freshened from the west, and just about the time she was shaping away for Australia the 'dam' nigger' spread his own sail of pandanus leaves and twirled his own helm of niaouli wood and headed the catamaran eastward, back toward New Caledonia.

Feeling somewhat dry after his exertion, he plucked at random from the platform a hollow reed with a sharp end, and, stretching himself at full length in his accustomed place, at the stern, he thrust the reed down into one of the bladders underneath and drank his fill of sweet water. . . .

He had a dozen such storage bladders remaining, built into the floats at intervals above the water-line—quite enough to last him safely home again.

## H. F. McKILLOP

1823-1879

### THE FIRST PERFORMANCE OF 'MAC- BETH' IN NEW ZEALAND<sup>1</sup>

WITH our usual good luck we made a quick passage to Port Nicholson; not, however, without having had a slight introduction to the north-westerners so prevalent in Cook's Straits, which, from subsequent experience, we found to be the greatest drawback to this in other respects most promising settlement.

Soon after our arrival we received a play-bill, which rather surprised us; having been given to understand at Auckland that this place was so inferior a settlement to the capital that theatricals seemed quite out of place. Curiosity, however, induced many of us to go and see what the place was like. We went accordingly, and found the house so full that it was with considerable difficulty we could get up to our perches—which we were told were the boxes. However, by dint of pulling from above and pushing from below, we managed to get into them. The ladder which had been placed for the accommodation of the audience mounting to these seats had been broken before our arrival by some of the audience during a slight disturbance. As soon as our eyes had become accustomed to the cloudy atmosphere, which was strongly impregnated with tobacco smoke, we discovered the stage and its recesses. The piece was just about to com-

<sup>1</sup> From *Reminiscences of Twelve Months' Service in New Zealand as a midshipman during the late disturbances in that colony*, 1849.

mence, the pit having come to an amicable understanding with each other, after considerable demonstrations of pulling the boxes down and annihilating the occupants.

The first actor who made his appearance was greeted with such a shout, and underwent such an impertinent cross-examination as to where he had procured his red striped pantaloons, how the moustache was stuck on, &c., that he could not proceed. This being highly irregular, the manager came on to request that order might be kept; unfortunately for himself he was known to the colonists as a vocalist, and was accordingly called upon for a song in such an energetic manner that, to save the stage from being upset, he sang 'The Admiral'; and being in the costume of *Macbeth*, it had on the whole a pleasing effect. He was loudly applauded for his good nature, which, however, was further put to the test by the wilful hearers calling on their first friend of the red striped trousers to favour them in a similar way; he, however, not being prepared to perform in this way, was hissed off the stage, and order was not restored until one of the actresses came on and sang at least half a dozen songs in succession, which were received with raptures of applause. The piece was then commenced, and went on smoothly for half an hour, when poor Macbeth happened to be left alone on the stage to get through some long soliloquy, the wayward audience, knowing him to be a dancing-master and excelling in the sailor's hornpipe, demanded it in a manner which would not bear a refusal. The fiddlers were accordingly ordered, in a very peremptory manner, to strike up; and poor Macbeth was obliged to start off. His long sword rather interfering with his steps, he laid it aside and went to work in capital style, which brought forth such shouts of delight and uproarious peals of

laughter, accompanied by such stamping and screams and other symptoms of excessive approbation, that in a few minutes down came the boxes, the supports having been knocked away from beneath.

This brought the hornpipe to a finale, and with it the whole of the performance. We, who had shared the downfall of the boxes, were glad to get out into the fresh air, having luckily escaped with a few bruises.

# H. DE VERE STACPOOLE

## MARU

### A DREAM OF THE SEA

#### I

THE night was filled with vanilla and frangipani odours, and the endless sound of the rollers on the reef. Somewhere away back amidst the trees a woman was singing; the tide was out, and from the veranda of Lygon's house, across the star-shot waters of the lagoon, moving yellow points of light caught the eye. They were spearing fish by torch-light in the reef pools.

It had been a shell lagoon once, and in the old days men had come to Tokahoe for sandal wood; now there was only copra to be had, and just enough for one man to deal with. Tokahoe is only a little island, where one cannot make a fortune but where you may live fortunately enough if your tastes are simple and beyond the lure of whisky and civilization.

The last trader had died in this paradise of whisky—or gin—I forget which, and his ghost was supposed to walk the beach on moonlit nights, and it was apropos of this that Lygon suddenly put the question to me, 'Do you believe in ghosts?'

'Do you?' replied I.

'I don't know,' said Lygon. 'I almost think I do, because every one does. Oh, I know a handful of hard-headed super-civilized people say they don't, but the mass of humanity does. The Polyne-sians and Micronesians do; go to Japan, go to Ireland, go anywhere and everywhere you will find ghost believers.'

Lombroso has written something like that,' said I.

'Has he? Well, it's a fact, but all the same it's not evidence; the universality of a belief seems to hint at reality in the thing believed in—yet what is more wanting in real reason than Tabu? Yet Tabu is universal. You find men here who daren't touch an artu tree because artu trees are Tabu to them; or eat turtle or touch a dead body. Well, look at the Jews; a dead body is Tabu to a Cohen; India is riddled with the business, so's English Society—it's all the same thing under different disguises.

'Funny that talking of ghosts we should have touched on this, for when I asked you did you believe in ghosts, I had a ghost story in mind, and Tabu comes into it. This is it.'

And this is the story somewhat as told by Lygon:

Some fifty years back, when Pease was a pirate bold, and Hayes in his bloom, and the top-sails of the *Leonora* a terror to all dusky beholders, Maru was a young man of twenty. He was son of Male-make, King of Fukariva, a kingdom the size of a soup plate, nearly as round and without a middle; an atoll island, in short; just a ring of coral, sea beaten and circling, like a bezel, a sapphire lagoon.

Fukariva lies in the Paumotus or Dangerous Archipelago, where the currents run every way, and the winds are unaccountable. The underwriters to this day fight shy of a Paumotus trader, and in the '60's few ships came here, and the few that came were on questionable business. Maru, up to the time he was twenty years of age, only remembered three.

There was the Spanish ship that came into the lagoon when he was only seven. The picture of her remained with him, burning and brilliant, yet tinged with the atmosphere of nightmare; a big top-sail schooner, that lay for a week mirroring her-



self on the lagoon water whilst she refitted; fellows with red handkerchiefs tied round their heads crawling aloft, and laying out on the spars. They came ashore for water, and what they could find in the way of taro and nuts, and made hay on the beach, insulting the island women till the men drove them off. Then, when she was clearing the lagoon, a brass gun was run out and fired, leaving a score of dead and wounded on that salt white beach.

That was the Spaniard. Then came a whaler, who took what she wanted, and cut down trees for fuel and departed, leaving behind the smell of her as an enduring recollection; and lastly, when Maru was about eighteen, a little old schooner slank in one early morning.

She lay in the lagoon like a mangy dog, a humble ship, very unlike the Spaniard or the blustering whale-man; she only wanted water and a few vegetables, and her men gave no trouble; then, one evening, she slank out again with the ebb, but she left something behind her—small-pox. It cleared the island, and of the hundred and fifty subjects of King Malemake, only ten were left—twelve people in all, counting the king and Maru.

The king died of a broken heart and age, and of the eleven people left, three were women, widows of men who had died of the small-pox.

Maru was unmarried, and as king of the community he might have collected the women for his own household. But he had no thought of anything but grief; grief for his father and the people who were gone. He drew apart from the others, and the seven widowers began to arrange matters as to the distribution of the three widows. They began with arguments and ended with clubs; three men were killed, and one of the women killed another man because he had brained the man of her fancy.

Then the dead were buried in the lagoon—Maru refusing to help because of his Tabu—and the three newly-married couples settled down to live their lives, leaving Maru out in the cold. He was no longer king. The women despised him because he hadn't fought for one of them, and the men because he had failed in brutality and leadership. They were a hard lot, true survivals of the fittest, and Maru, straight as a palm tree, dark-eyed, gentle, and a dreamer, seemed, amongst them, like a man of another tribe and time.

He lived alone, and sometimes in the sun blaze on that great ring of coral he fancied he saw the spirits of the departed walking as they had walked in life, and sometimes it might be thought he heard the voice of his father chiding him.

When the old man died Maru had refused to touch the body or help in its burial. Filial love, his own salvation, nothing would have induced Maru to break his Tabu, which barred him from touching a dead body.

It was part of him, an iron reef in his character beyond the influence of will.

## II

One morning, some six weeks after all this marrying and settling down, a brig came into the lagoon. She was a Blackbirder, the *Portsoy*, owned and captained by Colin Robertson, a Banffshire man, hence the name of his brig. Robertson and his men landed, took off water, coco-nuts, bananas, and everything else they could find worth taking. Then they turned their attention to the population. Four men were not a great find, but Robertson was not above trifles; he recruited them; that is to say, he kicked them into his boat and took them on board the *Portsoy*, leaving the three widows, grass

widows now—wailing on the shore. He had no finer feelings about the marriage tie, and he reckoned they would make out somehow. They were no use to him as labour, and they were ill-favoured; all the same, being a man of gallantry and some humour, he dipped his flag to them as the *Portsoy* cleared the lagoon and breasted the tumble at the break.

Maru, standing aft, saw the island with the white foam fighting the coral and the gulls threshing around the break; saw the palms cut against the pale aquamarine of the skyline that swept up into the burning blue of noon; heard the long rumble and boom of the surf on the following wind, and watched and listened till the sound of the surf died to nothingness, and of the island nothing remained but the palm tops, like pin-heads above the sea dazzle.

He felt no grief. But there came to him a new and strange thing, a silence, that the ship-board sounds could not break. Since birth the eternal boom of the waves on coral had been in his ears, night and day, and day and night, louder in storms, but always there. It was gone. That was why, despite the sound of the bow wash, and boost of the waves, and the creak of cordage and block, the brig seemed to have carried Maru into the silence of a new world.

They worked free of the Paumotus into the region of settled winds and accountable currents passing atolls, and reefs that showed like the threshing of a shark's tail in the blue, heading north-west in a world of wind and waves and sky, desolate of life, and, for Maru, the land of Nowhere.

So it went on from week to week, and, as far as he was concerned, so it might have gone on for ever. He knew nothing of the world into which he had been suddenly snatched, and land, which was

not a ring of coral surrounding a lagoon, was for him unthinkable.

He knew nothing of navigation, and the brass-bound wheel, at which a sailor was always standing with his hands on the spokes, now twirling it this way, now that, had for him a fascination beyond words, the fascination of a strange toy for a little child, and something more. It was the first wheel he had ever seen, and its movements about its axis seemed magical, and it was never left without some one to hold it and move it—why? The mystery of the binnacle into which the wheel-mover was always staring, as a man stares into a rock pool after fish, was almost as fascinating.

Maru peeped into the binnacle one day, and saw the fish, something like a star fish, that still moved and trembled. Then some one kicked him away, and he ran forward and hid, feeling that he had pried into the secrets of the white men's gods, and fearing the consequences.

But the white men's gods were not confined to the wheel and binnacle; down below they had a god that could warn them of the weather, for that day at noon, and for no apparent reason, the sailors began to strip the brig of her canvas. Then the sea rose, and two hours later the cyclone seized them. It blew everything away, and then took them into its calm heart, where, dancing like giants in dead still air, and with the sea for a ballroom floor, the hundred foot high waves broke the *Portsoy* to pieces.

Maru alone was saved, clinging to a piece of hatch cover, half stunned, confused, yet unafraid and feeling vaguely that the magic wheel and little trembling fish god had somehow betrayed the white men. He knew that he was not to die, because this strange world that had taken him from his island had not done with him yet, and the sea, in touch with him like this and half washing over him

at times, had no terror for him, for he had learned to swim before he had learned to walk. Also his stomach was full; he had been eating biscuits whilst the *Portsoy's* canvas was being stripped away, and though the wind was strong enough almost to whip the food from his hands.

The peaceful swell that followed the cyclone was a thing enough to have driven an ordinary man mad with terror. Now lifted hill high on a glassy slope, the whole wheel of the horizon came to view under the breezing wind and blazing sun, then gently down—sliding, the hatch cover would sink to a valley bottom only to climb again a glassy slope, and rise again hill high into the wind and sun. Foam flecks passed on the surface, and in the green sun-dazzled crystal of the valley floors, he glimpsed strips of fucus floating far down, torn by the storm from their rock attachments, and through the sloping wall of glass, up which the hatch cover was climbing, he once glimpsed a shark, lifted and cradled in a ridge of the great swell, strange to see as a fly in amber or a fish in ice.

The hatch cover was sweeping with a four-knot current, moving with a whole world of things concealed, or half-seen or hinted at. A sea current is a street; it is more, it is a moving pavement for the people of the sea; jelly fish were being carried with Maru on the great swell running with the current, a turtle broke the water close to him and plunged again, and once a white roaring reef passed by only a few cable lengths away. He could see the rock exposed for a moment, and the water closing on it in a tumble of foam.

### III

For a day and a night and a day and a night the voyage continued, the swell falling to a gentle heave, and then in the dawn came a sail, the mat-sail of a

canoe like a brown wing cut against the haliotis-shell coloured sky.

In the canoe was a girl, naked as the new moon. Paddle in hand, and half crouching, she drove the canoe towards him, the sail loose and flapping in the wind. Then he was on board the canoe, but how he got there he scarcely knew; the whole thing was like a dream within a dream.

In the canoe there was nothing, neither food nor water, only some fishing lines, and as he lay exhausted, consumed with thirst and faint with hunger, he saw the girl resetting the sail. She had been fishing last evening from an island up north, and blown out to sea by a squall had failed to make the land again, but she had sighted an island in the sou'west, and was making for it, when she saw the hatch cover and the brown, clinging form of Maru.

As he lay half dead in the bottom of the canoe, he watched her as she crouched with eyes fixed on the island and the steering paddle in hand, but before they could reach it, a squall took them, half-filling the canoe with rain-water, and Maru drank and drank till his ribs stood out, and then, renewed, half rose, as the canoe, steered by the girl, rushed past tumbling green seas and a broken reef to a beach white as salt, towards which the great trees came down with the bread-fruits dripping with the new-fallen rain, and the palms bending like whips in the wind.

#### IV

Talia, that was her name, and though her language was different from the tongue of Maru, it had a likeness of a sort. In those days that little island was uncharted and entirely desolate but for the gulls of the reef and the birds of the woods, and it was a wonderland to Maru, whose idea of land

as a sea-beaten ring of coral was shattered by woods that bloomed green as a sea-cave to the moonlight, high ground, where rivulets danced amidst the ferns, and a beach protected from the outer seas by a far-flung line of reefs. Talia to him was as wonderful as the island; she had come to him out of the sea; she had saved his life; she was as different from the women of the Paumotus as day from night. A European would have called her beautiful, but Maru had no thought of her beauty or her sex; she was just a being, beneficent, almost divorced from earth; the strangest thing in the strange world that Fate had seized him into, part with the great heaving swell he had ridden so long, the turtle that had broken up to look at him, the spouting reef, the sunsets over wastes of water, and the stars spread over wastes of sky.

He worshipped her in his way, and he might have worshipped her at a greater distance, only for the common bond of youth between them, and the incessant call of the world around them. Talia was practical; she seemed to have forgotten her people, and that island up north, and to live entirely in the moment. They made two shacks in the bushes, and she taught him island woodcraft, and the uses of berries and fruit that he had never seen before; also when to fish in the lagoon; for a month after they reached the island the poisonous season arrived, and Talia knew it, how, who can tell? She knew many things by instinct, the approach of storms, and when the poisonous season had passed, the times for fishing, and little by little their tongues, that had almost been divided at first, became almost one so that they could chatter together on all sorts of things, and she could tell him that her name was Talia, the daughter of Tepairu, that her island was named Makea, that her people had twenty canoes, big ones, and many little ones, and that

Tepairu was not the name of a man, but a woman. That Tepairu was queen or chief woman of her people, now that her husband was dead.

And Maru was able to tell her by degrees of what he would remember, of the old Spanish ship, and how she spouted smoke and thunder, and killed the beach people, of his island and its shape—he drew it on the sand, and Talia, who knew nothing of atolls, at first refused to believe in it, thinking he was jesting—of his father, who was chief man or king of Fukariva, and of the destruction of the tribe. Then he told of the ship with the little wheel—he drew it on the sand—and the little fish god; of the centre of the cyclone, where the waves were like white dancing men, and of his journey on the hatch cover across the blue heaving sea.

They would swim in the lagoon together, right out to the reefs where the great rollers were always breaking, and out there Talia always seemed to remember her island, pointing north with her eyes fixed across the sea dazzle, as though she could see it, and her people, and the twenty canoes beached on the spume white beach beneath the palms.

‘Some day they will come,’ said Talia. She knew her people, those sea rovers, inconsequent as the gulls. Some day, for some reason or none, one of the fishing canoes would fish as far as this island, or be blown there by some squall. She would take Maru back with her. She told him this.

The thought began to trouble Maru. Then he grew gloomy. He was in love. Love had hit him suddenly. Somehow, and in some mysterious manner, she had changed from a beneficent being, and part of a dream, to a girl of flesh and blood. She knew it, and at the same moment he turned for her into a man.

Up to this she had had no thought of him except as an individual, for all her dreams about him, he



might as well have been a palm-tree, but now it was different, and in a flash he was everything. The surf on the reef said, Maru, and the wind in the trees, Maru, and the gulls fishing and crying at the break had one word, Maru! Maru! Maru!

Then, one day, swimming out near the bigger break in the reefs, a current drove them together, their shoulders touched, and Maru's arm went round her, and amidst the blue laughing sea and the shouting of the gulls, he told her that the whole world was Talia, and as he told her and as she listened, the current of the ebb, like a treacherous hand, was drawing them through the break towards the devouring sea.

They had to fight their way back, the ebb just beginning would soon be a mill-race, and they knew, and neither could help the other. It was a hard struggle for love and life against the enmity against life and love that hides in all things from the heart of man to the heart of the sea, but they won. They had reached calm waters, and were within twenty strokes of the beach when Talia cried out suddenly and sank.

Maru, who was slightly in front, turned and found her gone; she had been seized with cramp, the cramp that comes from over-exertion, but he did not know that; the lagoon was free of sharks, but, despite that fact, and the fact that he did not fear them, he fancied for one fearful moment that a shark had taken her.

Then he saw her below, a dusky form on the coral floor, and he dived.

He brought her to the surface, reached the sandy beach, and, carrying her in his arms, ran with her to the higher level of the sands, and placed her beneath the shade of the trees. She moved in his arms as he carried her, and when he laid her down, her breast heaved in one great sigh, water ran from

her mouth, her limbs stiffened, and she moved no more.

Then all the world became black for Maru; he knew nothing of the art of resuscitating the drowned. Talia was dead.

He ran amongst the trees crying out that Talia was dead; he struck himself against tree boles and was tripped by ground lianas; the things of the forest seemed trying to kill him too. Then he hid amongst the ferns, lying on his face, and telling the earth that Talia was dead. Then came sundown, and after that the green moonlight of the woods, and suddenly sleep, with a vision of blue laughing sea and Talia swimming beside him, and then day again, and with the day the vision of Talia lying dead beneath the trees. He could not bury her. He could not touch her. The iron reef of his Tabu held firm, indestructible, unalterable as the main currents of the sea.

He picked fruits and ate them like an animal, and without knowing that he ate, torn towards the beach by the passionate desire to embrace once more the form that he loved, but held from the act by a grip ten thousand years old, and immutable as gravity or the spirit that lives in religions.

He must not handle the dead. Through all his grief came a weird touch of comfort; she had not been dead when he carried her ashore. He had not touched the dead.

Then terrible thoughts came to him of what would happen to Talia if he left her lying there. Of what predatory gulls might do. He had some knowledge of these matters, and past visions of what had happened on Fukariva when the dead were too numerous for burial came to him, making him shiver like a whipped dog. He could, at all events, drive the birds away, without touching her, without even looking at her his presence on the beach would

keep the birds away. It was near noon when this thought came to him. He had been lying on the ground, but he sat up now as though listening to this thought. Then he rose up and came along cautiously amongst the trees. As he came, the rumble of the reef grew louder, and the sea-wind began to reach him through the leaves; then the light of day grew stronger, and slipping between the palm boles, he pushed a great bread-fruit leaf aside and peeped, and there, on the blinding beach, under the forenoon sun, more clearly even than he had seen the ghosts of men on Fukariva, he saw the ghost of Talia walking by the sea and wringing its hands.

Then the forest took him again, mad, this time, with terror.

When on Fukariva he had seen the ghosts of men walking in the sun-blaze on the coral, he had felt no terror; he had never seen them except on waking from sleep beneath some tree, and the sight of them had never lasted for more than a moment. He had said to himself, 'they are the spirits of the departed', and they had seemed to him part of the scheme of things, like reflections cast on the lagoon, or the spirit voices heard in the wind, or dreams, or the ships that had come from Nowhere and departed Nowhere.

But the ghost of Talia was different from these. It was in some tremendous way real, and it wept because the body of Talia lay unburied.

He had made it weep.

He alone could give it rest.

Away, deep in the woods, hiding amongst the bushes, springing alive with alarm at the slightest sound, he debated this matter with himself, and curiously, now, love did not move him at all or urge him; it was as though the ghost of Talia had stepped between him and his love for Talia, not destroying it, but obscuring it. Talia for him had become two

things: the body he had left lying on the sand under the trees, and the ghost he had seen walking on the beach; the real Talia no longer existed for him, except as the vaguest wraith. He lay in the bushes, facing the fact that so long as the body lay unburied the ghost would walk. It might even leave the beach and come to him.

This thought brought him from his hiding-place; he could not be alone with it amongst the bushes, and then he found that he could not stand alone with it amongst the trees, for at any moment she might appear, wringing her hands, in one of the glades, or glide to his side from behind one of the tree boles.

He made for the southern beach.

Although unused to woods, till he reached this island he had the instinct for direction, a brain compass more mysterious than the little trembling fish that had directed the movements of the wheel on board the *Portsoy*. Making due south, amidst the gloom of the trees, he reached the beach where the sun was blazing on the sands and the birds flying and calling over the lagoon. The reef lay far out, a continuous line, unlike the reefs to the north, continuous but for a single break through which the last of the ebb was flowing out oilily, mirroring a palm-tree that stood there like the warden of the lagoon. The sound of the surf was low, the wind had died away, and as Maru stood watching and listening, peace came to his distracted soul.

He felt safe here. Even when Talia had been with him the woods had always seemed to him peopled with lurking things, unused as he was to trees in great masses; and now released from them and touched again by the warmth of the sun he felt safe. It seemed to him that the ghost could not come here. The gulls said it to him and the flashing water, and as he lay down on the sands, the surf

on the reef said it to him. It was too far away for the ghost to come. It seemed to him that he had travelled many thousand miles from a country remote as his extreme youth, losing everything on the way but a weariness greater than Time could hold or thought take recognition of.

Then he fell asleep and he slept whilst the sun went down into the west and the flood swept into the lagoon and the stars broke out above. That tremendous sleep unstirred by the vaguest dream lasted till the dawn was full.

Then he sat up, renewed as though God had remade him in mind and body.

A gull was strutting on the sands by the water's edge, its long shadow strutting after it, and the shadow of the gull flew straight as a javelin into the renewed mind of Maru. Talia was not dead. He had not seen her ghost. She had come to life and had been walking by the sea wringing her hands for him thinking him drowned. For the form he had seen walking in the sands had cast a shadow. He remembered that now. Ghosts do not cast shadows.

And instantly his mind, made reasonable by rest and sleep, revisualized the picture that had terrified his mind distraught by grief. That was a real form, what folly could have made him doubt it? Talia was alive—alive, warm, and waiting for him on the northern beach, and the love for her that fear had veiled rushed in upon him and seized him with a great joy that made him shout aloud as he sprang to his feet, yet with a pain at his heart like the pain of a rankling spear-wound as he broke through the trees shouting as he ran: 'Talia! Talia! Talia!'

He passed the bushes where he had hidden, and the ferns. He heard the sounds of the surf coming to meet him, he saw the veils of the leaves divide and the blaze of light and morning splendour on the northern sands and lagoon and sea.

He stood and looked.

Nothing.

He ran to the place where he had laid her beneath the trees, there was still faintly visible the slight depression made by her body, and close by, strangely and clearly cut, the imprint of a little foot.

Nothing else.

He stood and called and called, and no answer came but the wood echo and the sound of the morning wind; then he ran to the sea edge. Then he knew.

The sand was trodden up and on the sand, clear cut and fresh, lay the mark left by a beached canoe and the marks left by the feet of the men who had beached her and floated her again.

They had come—perhaps her own people—come, maybe, yesterday whilst he was hiding from his fears, debating with his Tabu—come, and found her, and taken her away.

He plunged into the lagoon and, swimming like an otter and helped by the out-going tide, reached the reef. Scrambling on to the rough coral, bleeding from cuts but feeling nothing of his wounds, he stood with wrinkled eyes facing the sea blaze and with the land-breeze blowing past him out beyond the thundering foam of the reef to the blue and heaving sea.

Away to the north, like a brown wing-tip, showed the sail of a canoe. He watched it. Tossed by the lilt of the swell it seemed beckoning to him. Now it vanished in the sea dazzle, now reappeared, dwindling to a point, to vanish at last like a dream of the sea, gone, never to be recaptured.

‘And Maru?’ I asked of Lygon, ‘did he ever——’

‘Never,’ said Lygon. ‘The islands of the sea are many. Wait.’ He struck a gong that stood close to his chair, struck it three times, and the sounds

passing into the night mixed with the voices of the canoe men returning from fishing on the reef.

Then a servant came on to the veranda, an old, old man, half bent like a withered tree.

'Maru,' said Lygon, 'you can take away these glasses—but one moment, Maru, tell this gentleman your story.'

'The islands of the sea are many,' said Maru, like a child repeating a lesson. He paused for a moment as though trying to remember some more, then he passed out of the lamplight with the glasses.

'A year ago he remembered the whole story,' said Lygon.

But for me the whole story lay in those words, that voice, those trembling hands that seemed still searching for what the eyes could see no more.

## G. B. LANCASTER

### THE STORY OF WI

And if I have taken the common clay,  
And shaped it cunningly  
In the form of a god that was digged a sod,  
The greater honour to me.

HE was a clod when Lane found him—a piece of six-year-old Maori flesh, with the carriage of a conqueror, and the tongue of a dissolute gutter-snipe, and the brown of the earth that bore him in his supple skin. Lane was looking for land in those days, and waded deep in the waters of indecision before he finally paid tithe to Mindoorie in the province of Southland. He had searched Taranaki, Wairarapa, and Auckland in the north, and had fallen foul of many native kiangas where the pakeha was unwelcome. He had nearly got himself mere'd (this is done with a thing like a tomahawk) a score of times, and in those ways he assimilated some unofficial dregs of Maori information.

Then he met Wi—which is, in full, Wiremu Poananga—which is, in translation, William Clematis. Wi's father was dead in a coastal raid, and Wi's mother, being sick, was cast out, according to custom, that she might die without defilement to the pa. This she obligingly did, and Wi sat on her body out in the white sunlight, and beat her with his baby fists because she took no heed of him.

Lane rode past, and he hooked up the child with his crop-handle under the armpit, and demanded an explanation in his broken Maori from the men who lolled at the gates.

They could not touch the body until certain



formulae had been observed, for the Maori body is sacred, both in life and death. And they could not touch Wi, for Wi had touched the Thing on the grass. This was made clear whilst Wi stood up, defiant in his nakedness, and hurled all the bad words of his knowledge at the pakeha. He was grandly built (but this is a race-mark. Maoris make the finest footballers in the world until they grow tallowy from over-eating), and his strong little face had none of the round-eyed stolidity of the ordinary Maori infant.

‘He’s too good to go loafing in a pa all his days,’ said Lane, and forthwith sought out Wi’s only remaining relative. For Wi came of a tribe that had fallen on evil days, but—in some crosswise fashion—he had the blood of Te Arawa in his veins.

The woman who belonged to Wi was old and toothless, and a smoker of some sixty years’ standing. She spoke no English, and understood less. But Lane made pantomime with his tobacco-pouch and the wrathful Wi, and in due time the bargain was struck. The pa provided Wi with a shirt that came to his middle, and trousers that buttoned over the shoulders and made him behave outrageously. Then Lane set him on the horn of the saddle, and took him away to be fashioned into a pakeha. It was the act of a very young man, and it was quite possible that it would lead to complications later on. But Lane gloried in the knowledge that it was a chance in three lifetimes, Maoris being notoriously devoted to their babies, and won the love of the fierce little heart in a week.

‘What are you going to do with the brat?’ asked Brazenose when Lane came back to town. ‘He follows you round like a poodle-dog, and he does seem to have a mortal dislike to clothes. Besides, he will be most sinfully jealous when you form other ties.’

When Lane left England he had said in his wrath that he would never marry. And it may here be noted that he kept that oath.

‘We’ll meet that when it comes. Just now I’ve to teach him our lingo, and cleanly habits. He’s quick in the uptake. And I want to see how the Maori temperament stands English training.’

This was, of course, before education of the native became a matter of custom, and Brazenose grinned his derision. Wi had left a double row of teeth-marks in his arm that morning.

‘You’ll find it a dangerous amusement, then. The imp has too much devil in him for my taste.’

But Lane understood the plucky, passionate baby soul rather better.

‘Don’t you believe it. He’ll be a fine man one day. There’s spunk in the little beggar. I thrashed him yesterday, and never got a chirp out of him. Hurt him properly, too, and he took it like a man. Yes; I’ll make something valuable out of Wi ’fore all’s done.’

‘Wish you joy,’ said Brazenose, unconvinced. But Lane laughed, and betook himself without fear to the making of Wi.

Wi was a round-eyed and solemn infant, with strong white teeth that tested all strange things, from the soap in Lane’s dressing-room to saddle-straps and a new half-sovereign. This he folded as fingers fold paper, and sealed with indent of sharp teeth; and Lane wore it on his watch-chain until his death.

Every dog in the town followed the child, and he played in the gutters with those of his race, and was severely whipped in consequence quite three times a week. Lane ruled with a stern but absolutely just hand, and there came to Wi slowly some notions of truth and uprightness—the two things which nature has not bestowed on the Maori in any prodigality.

It is very true that he found delight in sinning up to the full of his power; but his unbreakable love for Lane was such that it ever gave to the man the victory when the two wills met. Men at the club called the child 'Lane's joke', and took much pleasure in teasing him until Wi learnt the futility of losing his temper, and wielded the cunning of his tongue instead. Then Lane began really to feel the burden of responsibility. Through the months that rushed into the years Wi drank of more bitter waters than are usually poured for the young, and tasted maturer joys. For, like all aboriginals, he ripened out of his time, and was wise in things that a boy should not know before the down came on his lip. In the school where he mixed with pakeha boys alone he brought trouble on his black head at the first. He used their speech and their games, but he held his own by the power of his fist, and sang most improper songs of love and war and hate in the dormitories of nights. And when the Head made objection, Wi mimicked him down the corridor length, and went from his punishment to sin again.

Lane came in the first term to see how many of the commandments the boy had broken. For well he knew that not to all pakeha is the Maori brother under the skin.

He walked on to the playground with the Head; and Wi, having picked himself out of a practice scrum, galloped up the field headlong, capless, with gleaming eyes and teeth.

He shook hands with a white man's grip, and gave his greeting in a white man's tongue. Lane looked him over in complete satisfaction.

'And that's all right. You are a regular pakeha now, Wi.'

'Wai? I am more than the pakeha,' said the boy, strutting. 'I can lick every chap here 'cept Calf

Richards, and he 's learnt boxing. I want to learn boxing too, pater.'

'You've licked 'em all?' demanded Lane. For there were well over a hundred boys in the two houses, and Wi had been there just three months.

'All that were big enough.' The quick blood blackened Wi's face. 'They called me "pononga!" E-E-! Nga tangat kino!'

'Pononga' means slave. It is the one epithet which the Maori will not forgive when it is used with intent.

'It's not unlike Poananga,' suggested Lane, hiding a grin. 'Perhaps they knew no better.'

'They know now,' said Wi, balancing on one foot. 'May I learn boxing—soon?'

'Well,' said Lane, 'but you mustn't kill 'em all, Wi. You're too strong for your years already.'

'To be strong is best of all things,' said Wi decidedly. And Lane laughed, half agreeing.

Providence had attended to the boy's outward person with more elaboration than was absolutely necessary; and it is certain that Lane gloried as deep in the well-hung limbs and clean-shaped face and neck as in the spirit that he had handled with so much love until it stood up, unashamed and eager, and fearless with the childlike faith that is altogether Maori. Wi poised his body as no Englishman can, or ever will do, and his lines, though fine and thoroughbred, already give promise of enormous strength. It was in his strength that Wi took all the pride and delight of a young animal—and in his knowledge of woodcraft—and in the fortune which had given him two languages wherewith to scourge the boy who angered him.

But his temper was purely terrible at times; and when he sought to slay the Mindoorie cook with a sheath-knife, Lane flogged him until his arm fell limp, drawing blood before repentance. The repen-

tance came at midnight, when Wi faced Lane where he smoked an uneasy pipe in the study, and told him in lordly words that he was forgiven. This, for the Maori blood in the boy. The white training showed next, and then Lane dressed the raw back with pitiful fingers, concurring in Wi's suggestion that slit green-hide should not be used hereafter.

But Lane put no physical punishment on Wi again; for it is not possible to flog an elephant without dual loss of dignity, and very soon men began to fear Lane's little brown boy because of his powerful body. The casual observer called him fat. But those who saw him stripped for fight on the football field knew the meaning of the mighty knobs that swelled and shifted under the yellow jersey, and ran in following ripples down the brown shining limbs.

'You'll have the fellow a prize-fighter 'fore all's done,' warned Brazenose: but Lane took no heed, designing other ends for Wi.

Wi was to go into the House, and speak for the rights of his own people. He was to learn the worth of the soil which his own people had ceased to hold. He was to impress on them the need for sobriety, and for much more beside, if they hoped to continue a factor in the land.

Wi knew all about it. And when his school-time was passed, he came down to Mindoorie to tell Lane that he could not do this thing.

It was hard to tell, and Wi came at it crudely, so that Lane sat up in the veranda chair, and looked with eyes that Wi had not seen before.

'Yes? You intend to set yourself against all that I have worked and planned for since you were six years old? This needs explanation, I think. Well?'

'Don't put it like that,' said Wi, and choked.

'I will put it like that. Well?' Then as Wi continued in silence, Lane turned on him fiercely.

‘What is it? Brazenose always said—Is it prize-fighting, or—a woman?’

This tickled Wi.

‘Not either, exactly,’ he said chuckling gently.

‘It is—I want to go into the Church.’

‘The Church!’ Lane sat down suddenly. ‘The Church! Rubbish!’

‘I must,’ said Wi, his great hands gripping and ungripping. ‘A man needn’t be a softy because he preaches—can’t be, if he means to go among my folk. I’ve been thinking it over these two years, pater. And there are several reasons——’

‘Yes?’ Lane had himself in hand again. ‘We will have them, please.’

Wi lifted his shoulders as if he was fitting them to a load. He stood up—about two yards high and one thick—in the fading evening, and the spare grizzled man watched him unflinchingly.

The men were singing down at the wharves, and Cortiss’s gay shout led the way. Wi waited until the music had died in laughter. Then he said slowly——

‘Speaking largely, you white men have taken away our beliefs, and not bothered much about giving us anything in exchange. And there is nothing messes up a race so much as want of religion. We don’t stick to our own codes of honour, and—so far—we have not assimilated yours. This is what will knock us out, body and soul, unless we can learn better. I have learnt better, and I’m going to pass the knowledge on to my people.’

‘Get some one else to do it,’ said Lane. ‘Wi, you are a born speaker. I knew it when you first swore at me in the pa. You’d be much more use in Parliament.’

‘The Native question is over-handled there already. They all want to roof in the house before

the floor-plates are laid. I think I could lay some floor-plates,' said Wi, with grave sincerity. 'You must let me serve my own people, pater. I belong to them.'

'You belong to me,' said Lane sharply.

'No.' The dark blood ran to Wi's forehead. 'I owe you everything—don't think I forget that—but I was Maori before you took me.'

'Well,' Lane sighed impatiently. 'You said there were several reasons?'

A weka was calling to his mate from the flax in the paddock creek. The notes were indescribably mournful, and Wi shivered as he answered.

'I am stronger than any man I have ever stripped to. I am stronger than any man I have ever seen, I think. And we Maori are not as you pakeha. Our passions have not had the centuries of repression. I have a very devil of a temper—you should know that—and it is so easy——' He ran his hand up his left forearm, and flung it out in explanation. Maoris make half their speech with their bodies.

'Ah,' said Lane, understanding that Wi feared himself. 'And so you wish to make the Church your whipper-in? That is very noble of you, Wi.'

Wi made a quick step, and for just one moment Lane saw how the Maoris of old put terror into their enemies. It was not a nice sight at all.

The look died.

'You didn't mean to hit quite so hard, pater. All right. No; I'm not seeing this as a coward. I didn't think to have to tell you that.' Then his voice grew rougher, as if some great force drove it. 'I cannot swing in a rata-loop always. I must choose the above or below. Already I have fought more desire than you ever will; and do you think I do not know the hearts of my people? We are a very noble race, but we can sin most fully on all counts that your religion forbids. Your faith is my

faith; by training first, and now by choice. And my people are mine by blood. I think you will understand, perhaps——' He broke off abruptly, and his free, light step beat out up the drive where the shadows were thickest.

A Maori can never be absolutely frank. He has too many generations that guarded life with the tongue behind him. But Wi gave to this white man more, much more, than the native generally gives, and Lane was not ungrateful.

To prove it, he sunk his own desires, making no parade, and sent Wi to a Maori Theological College that he might learn among men of his caste. Since Wi was to give his life to the brown man, it were better that he should not become too English.

Brazenose laughed when he heard of it.

'Wi will convert his hearers by force,' he said. 'And he is morally certain to be chucked out before he is priested. He hasn't an over-good record, and Nature never intended him for this kind of thing. What's the idea?'

'Don't,' said Lane. 'Wi makes me ashamed. He follows the God of our fathers with more reverence than nine-tenths of us do. You know how dead earnest a Maori is when he gets set on a thing? Wi is putting all his soul into this.'

'Bah! He'll soon be sick of a student life.'

'Don't you believe it,' said Lane; and his keen eyes softened, recalling a memory. 'He took me to his own church last time I was up north. They hold the services both in Maori and English, and the students read the lessons. Wi read one—in Maori—and you know he's got a voice like a bird on the tree. The sun came in just the same on the hideous gods they've got carved on the walls, and the white stone font, and the black bent heads. I tell you it made me feel—feel as I haven't felt——'

'And that's no argument at all,' said Brazenose



irreverently. 'Wi's made a good many men feel as they haven't felt—and a good many women too I don't doubt.'

'Not to his knowledge, I think. And that bothers me sometimes. Wi will have to go lonely all his days. He's not likely to look at a Maori, and he daren't look at a white girl.'

Between the Maori man and the Maori woman, there is all this difference. The woman, by herself, by her daughters and granddaughters, may mate with a white man. For the Maori man there is nothing of this kind. No white woman weds with him, to the third generation. And he, knowing it, shapes his life accordingly, and has no desire that it should be otherwise. In his dignified soul he has toleration for the alien, and perhaps a little contempt.

But Wi had been bred to love an Englishman, and he had lived among pakeha until he had forgot this unwritten law. And it was so that the mischief fell.

Besides—and this fired temptation—the old woman who charred for the house-master spoke no more than the voice of the town when she said, 'It's a strong body takes a woman more'n looks, and he's got both, wi' a cunning tongue added. You take it from me, Mrs. Blayne, he's the boy for the gels.'

'An' fur more than the gels,' said Mrs. Blayne over her teacup; and the other chuckled comfortably.

'Well, listen now. I seed 'em go by this mornin'—him an' the little Eru chap—a-carrin' water fur the bilers. "Hillo, old lady," says he. "Gimme that bucket till I put it up the steps fur yer." "Yer might put meself up too," says I, chaffin', "seein as there's ten on 'em." An' as I'm a livin' soul, he picks me up immediate like I was a skein o' pack-

thread, an' dumps me on the veranda wi' the bucket. An' me no fairy neither.'

Mrs. Blayne agreed without reservation.

'Must ha' the strength of a elegant,' she said.

'An' the reach of it too, barrin' the trunk. I thought I stud six fut from him. "What'll yer want fur payment?" says I, gigglin' an' gaspin'; fur he'd rucked up me apron like a man holdin' a baby. "Jest this," says he, an' kisses me fair on the mouth. Then they goes off laughin', him swingin' head an' shoulders above Eru. And I didn't wipe off that kiss, though maybe I'll not tell my old man of it.'

The college students did their own work, and Henare Poihewa, whose father was so great a chief that his real name could never be mentioned, thought it no shame to scrub out his cubicle twice a week. He did it very well too.

It was this same Henare who went with Wi the first night that he met the Little White Girl. There were other girls in the room, but none so white and so small. Wi could have broken her between his palm and three fingers, and this made him feel clumsy for the first time in his life. But he sang to her instead—sang the strange Maori chants that have no scored music, and that tug at the heart-strings of the pakeha and hurt him, because he knows that he is for ever outside the mystical, unexplainable power that begets them. And it happened that he made the Little White Girl cry—stealthily behind her hand, that none might see. But Wi saw; and he went home treading on air, to find relief in wiping the floor with Rau Wilson, who had annexed his blanket.

In the next months Wi saw the Little White Girl weekly—at picnics, and at all places where it is possible for two people to talk apart from the eyes and ears of all the world. The Little White Girl said openly that Wi was quite adorable; and Wi, in

innocent sincerity, began to desire her for his very own. And now would have entered the element of danger if Wi had not been training his spirit for higher things. For the savage overword is might, and the Little White Girl did not know it.

Then it grew near to the time when Wi must take his deacon's orders; and Lane, setting things in careful train that he might go up and see it done, had his world struck away beneath him by a frantic letter from the Principal. It implied that Wi was possessed of madness and many devils, and implored Lane to come straightway.

Lane went that night. There was a heavy sea outside the Heads, and the boat laboured like a tortured soul. But she could not have known anything about the torture of Lane's soul.

It was because he understood so much of that part of the Maori that cannot be tabulated that Lane was afraid. When such as Wi give up the game, it is better to forget that they were once true men. For the memory will be painful. Wi had cleansed himself for his work in all faithfulness and honesty, but—Lane shivered, tramping the wet deck. He knew the savage drop in the blood which nothing could purge. Yet it does not poison the veins of more than one man in three hundred.

The Principal was upset, and much annoyed with Wi. Brazenose, when the thing became public, said that he did not wonder. It appeared that Wi had come in one night, and comprehensively cursed the College—and all that it contained, all that it said, did, and was. He had then thrown Ware Taureka, who attempted to hold him, and put out his shoulder; and when finally overpowered by numbers, had surged into slow-dropping Maori, which—to judge by the faces of his companions, the Principal himself being a literary scholar exclusively—was unfit for the ears of divinity students, or any one else.

Lane remembered the little brown boy who had railed at him in the pa; and he remembered all the patient years that had gone between.

‘Where is he? I want to see him—now.’

‘He is confined to a small room over the stair, pending a reply from the Bishop. His exclusion will, of course, be necessary—his public expulsion. We must do what we can to ameliorate the effects of this disgraceful affair. Not that I am alarmed for the others. They are good, steady lads——’

‘Will you kindly allow me to see him at once?’ asked Lane in a desperation that shook him as the Principal took him up the narrow uncarpeted stairs that Wi’s feet had helped to hollow.

‘He will give no reasons to any one,’ said the Principal, fitting the key in the lock. ‘He is absolutely sullen and uncaring.’

Lane nodded. If Wi had not been uncaring he would long since have broken in the door that stood between him and liberty.

‘I will see him alone,’ he said. ‘No, I am not afraid. Wi will not hurt me. Did you forget that he is my adopted son?’

Then the Principal muttered something about being sorry, and went away, leaving the grate of a lock behind him, and the silence of the two in the room.

Wi turned round. He was thinner than when Lane had last seen him; but that might be the result of closer study. His manner was courteous and easy as ever, and his handshake firm. But behind the big dark eyes there was a something shut down. The one was a native; the other the white of a usurping race. Lane felt it, as Wi intended that he should.

‘What is it, Wi?’ asked Lane simply, and put a hand on the broad shoulder.

Wi stood without speech or movement.

‘Did you know how you had crumpled that

fellow up?' said Lane. 'The cross throw, was it? 'Must have been a plucky man to stand up to you.'

The child-side purred under the praise.

'He hadn't a hope. None of them had a hope if they'd come singly. But they split on me like shingle from a tip-dray.' He swerved aside. 'Won't you sit down? I've only a bed, and it creaks——'

'You're looking a bit off colour, Wi.' Lane was feeling his way carefully, for the Maori mind has many windings, and no white man may hope to hold the clue. But this seared a raw place somewhere, and Wi spoke thickly.

'Off colour! I can never be off colour. Not when I am dying—not when I'm dead. Look at my hands.'

He held them out with a quick grace that never allowed his bulk to be clumsy, and Lane stared at them, puzzled, seeing nothing new.

He had always known that Wi was dark among his kind. For where the sun touched him he was purplish-brown; he bruised ink-blackly, and his finger-nails were burnt sienna.

'Don't be an owl,' very sharply. 'What does that matter?'

'I can never be white, can I? Prayers can't make me white. I've tried—I've tried. My body is black, and my soul is therefore black. That is what you pakeha think. That is what you think, oh, hunga mohio.'

He was wild with a passion that made his young face terrible. But his will took command as Lane cried——

'Wi—for God's sake——'

'Keep your white God for speech with white people. He is the pakeha God. Ia tuku! He is not mine. I have served Him—your God—and His Tamariki laugh at me. Aue! Naku ano i mea, i he

ai ahau. But I will not any more. Keep your white God, for He is nothing to the Maori.'

'This is blasphemy, Wi. Are you gone mad?'

But to Lane the slow, incisive voice was more hopelessly awful than any madness which runs all ways.

'Ka te noa,' said Wi, without interest, and squatted on the floor. 'Are you going?'

Lane cast his eyes round the bare room in search of some weapon to drive home. A psalm-book of Wi's lay on the floor, brought up, probably, by Henare. It had been dog-eared, and well loved once. It was desecrated shreds now, ground under-foot. Lane looked from it to Wi, sitting still and stolid. The attitude was comically suggestive, but Lane was not seeing fun just then. Wi was pakeha no more. That was all it told him.

'Wi,' he said, and went to him. 'Because I have been father to you all these years, tell me what has happened. Tell me, dear old chap.'

Wi stood up; and it was his breaking voice in the little dark room that came back to trouble Lane in lonely evenings on Mindoorie.

'How can I believe your Bible that does not speak truth? It calls all men "rite"—equal. Then am I not a man? Yet am I like a man, though some say I am liker a bullock. But if the pakeha is not for the Maori, then is the pakeha's religion not for the Maori. So to Atua shows it. Thy God shall be thy God, and thy God only. And thy maidens shall be thine, and thine only. It is quite plain. Oh, most truthfully does the white man call the brown his brother!'

'The Little White Girl,' thought Lane; and under his breath he did not wish her well. 'Just so, Wi. You are not a man. You are a child that cries and beats the earth because it is not smooth as a passion-fruit rind.'

‘No,’ said Wi; and the something behind his eyes was lifted that Lane might understand quite fully. ‘A man is a coward who cannot stand up under sorrow. I am not a coward. It is because I did not see before. I am strong, but that has no hold against things that are not of the flesh. How can that be given with the one hand which is taken away with the other? The Maori is not fit to love the tamaiti—the child of your God? Then is he not fit to love your God. That is all. I have learned it—learned it. I will not forget.’

‘And all this because a white girl has played with you,’ said Lane.

Wi sprang up with a snarl, swung the other man up, and Lane looked to have his head rammed between his shoulders against the wall. But he came again to his feet unhurt, and Wi stood still. It was a mightier self-control than Lane had seen in a man before.

‘I beg your pardon most earnestly, Wi,’ he said.

‘Do you not see’—Wi paid out his words as if each gave him separate pain—‘that this is the foreword of all? The white and the black are meant to be two peoples for ever. And your faith teaches that they are one. Then is your faith false that I have loved. There is no future for the Maori. He has sloughed his religion, and that of the pakeha is not for him. What shall I go into the pas and kiangas to teach my people?’

It was the white training that drove Wi to give explanation where he honestly believed explanation to be due. But the spirit shaping this was not within Lane’s comprehension. Only he saw that trouble had been averted for the Little White Girl in exactly inverse ratio to the payment given by the man.

‘But that is not the law of God,’ he said. ‘It is mere outward observance. Can’t you believe——’

‘No, I cannot believe. This has eaten into me

until it has eaten all belief away. I will go to my own gods. They are many, and I can cut new ones out of wood if I like. But I think that I will not believe them either.'

Lane had thought to tell Wi fearfully of the disgrace that waited him. Very nearly, he laughed to remember. When a man has lost his hold on eternity he does not regard the wrath of his kind.

A Maori is generally dignified—even in European clothes. The tragedy of a dying race was in Wi just then. Lane watched the impassive, dark face where the light from the little window touched it, and his voice was broken.

'What will you do, then?'

Wi lifted his shoulders. It was a curious trick he had sometimes, as if a weight bowed him.

'There will be fuss here first, I suppose. They will talk, and talk again; and the Head will call me evil names. But he does not know all I called him that he had taught me lies for so long. The boys know. Ware laughed. He said I was drunk. That is why I would have killed him. And then I will go away. Any way; it does not matter. And I will sit in the sun, and smoke, and drink brandy. And if Ware comes again to tell me that I am drunk, I will pull him in half. In our creed there is no punishment after death. So perhaps this is better.'

'And have you forgotten me?'

There was a quick movement from the window. But it stilled again.

'No, I have not forgotten you. I think I should have been angry once if it had been said that I should leave you. But it does not matter now. I will not live with you again. The pakeha has cheated my trust through all these years. He has given his Bible and withheld the application. I have not forgotten that either. No; I go to my own gods.' Then, as in the old days, his eyes were shot



with the craftiness of the savage. This was inevitable when you remember all that had gone before. But it made Lane heartsick to see it come.

‘That was a game you played with me, oh, atawhai pakeha; and it has hurt. But I shall sit in the sun and drink brandy, for I have no care to live. I know too much, and I am too little. And all white men are liars. This is the ending.’

And Lane went out.

## BEATRICE GRIMSHAW

### BEHIND THE RANGES

THROUGH Spence's store the romance of the gold-field flowed; tough, stringy men, with felt hats low on their brows, and earth-coloured clothing—men whose eyes were the iron eyes of the old prospector, and whose mouths were closed because they had seen so much more than a man may tell—hung over the counters, through endless Papuan forenoons and afternoons, slowly buying goods; slowly, with words counted like coins, discussing routes, carriers, north-west and south-east seasons.

'Boys', with mop heads and bare, sweating bodies, worked in the sheds behind the store, bringing out cases of tinned goods, opening, counting, packing for the field. In the background a couple of white clerks—very white indeed, for the low iron roof of Spence's stewed the spirit and the health out of a man—sat humped over ledgers that contained strange entries. Spence had his own system of book-keeping and his own special signs. A blue line marked against an account meant that the debtor was, like a ship, so long overdue as to be considered a loss. A black cross meant an account wiped out by death, proved and known. There were several blue-lined accounts; five or six with a black cross marked over the blue; two only that displayed a red circle boldly drawn over blue chalk and black ink alike, proclaiming the unexpected settlement of a bad debt by a bad debtor, who had turned out to be alive after all. This was romance, but Spence did not know it. Nor did he know that the bags and pickle-bottles in his locked safe contained romance

by the pennyweight and the pound. He thought they were full of gold.

Out from Spence's went the Argosies of the Laka goldfield sailing in launches, in cutters, in double-ender whaleboats, in schooners with dirty sails, away from the coral rock jetty, upon the ' long, long trail ' to the field. Back into Spence's came strange shadows of men, yellow and fever-thin with their trousers pockets full of little moleskin parcels, shouting for double bottles of champagne. Away from Spence's sometimes went stretchers, carried roughly by the black mop-headed boys, up to the hot tin hospital building on the hill. And again, from the coral jetty opposite Spence's, sometimes, in Spence's hired launch, sailed people out of the tin hospital, lying very quiet under a black cloth from Spence's store, to a place on the far side of a little still, palmy islet, from which no one ever came back to pay his bills.

Spence, small, fattish, bald, and old, dressed in a shirt that seemed like a full sail about to break loose upon the winds, and a pair of clean, shrunk white trousers, sat spider-like in a den at the end of the shop and surveyed his kingdom.

Spence's daughter, her hands busy on the typewriter keys, sat there too. She had learned the touch system down in Sydney; she could type and look about her. She could, for instance, tick out the well-known sentences about surprise regarding accounts overdue, and unexpected calls to be met, while she glanced down the shop and saw Sid Larne coming in, a black silhouette in the patch of yellow fire that was the door.

' There 's Sid, dad,' she said, taking one hand off the keys to twist a wavy lock of hair lower over her left ear.

You might not think much of Ivy Spence's features, but you could not deny her hair, or overlook

her fine, splendidly full young figure. Nobody tried to, except the three other unwedded girls of the settlement. Ivy had her following.

Spence did not lift his eyes from the bill of lading that occupied them.

'What then?' he asked one-sidedly, through his eternal tobacco pipe.

'You know, dad.'

It seemed that Spence did know.

'No good,' was his reply. And, more emphatically: 'No blanky good.'

'Do you want me to tell him so?' Ivy was half out of her chair.

'That's right,' agreed Spence contentedly. 'Handle it your own way, Junior.'

It was a name he used sometimes when he was pleased with her. There was tragedy in the name—tragedy of a wife buried alive in an asylum, of a son who would never be. But Spence was not conscious of the tragedy, any more than he was conscious of the romance of his business. He watched the girl, in her thin white muslin, step smartly down the dusky store, and said to himself unemotionally:

'She's as good a head for biz as a chap.'

Ivy was quite conscious that her father thought her moved by trading instincts. She laughed at him in her heart for not knowing that a much older instinct had her in its clutch. A man like Sid—five feet eleven; fur-thick hair; cairngorm eyes that bored through you, and made you feel you must laugh, yet made you feel afraid to do so; teeth like blocks of white reef coral, when he smiled—but he never did smile; she wondered how she knew.

Sid was speaking; one must pull oneself together. Ivy was vexed with herself. She knew quite well that the fancy she had taken handicapped her badly in the race she meant to run. When a girl didn't

care about a man she had so much more hold on him.

The remedy for that was ready to her hand. Dad had commissioned her to turn his application down. She knew that it was coming. She would.

And, anyhow, if he didn't go to the field——

Sid was talking. She liked his voice. It was hard.

'Can I see your father?'

'Sorry, Sid. He's that busy. He said you could talk to me.'

Larne stood still a minute—one could not say he hesitated; the word scarcely fitted.

'Your father knows,' he said presently. 'I want him to grub-stake me. Or part. I've got a very little cash.'

'Dad thinks,' explained Ivy fluently, 'that there's no more good in the Laka.'

'He's right,' agreed the tall man unexpectedly. 'I don't propose going on the Laka.'

'Where?' asked Ivy, with sudden interest, though she knew the futility of the question. The miners never told.

Sid answered by asking a question of her.

'Has your father still got those swags?'

'What, the swags of the men who didn't come back? Yes, Sid, he has. That's them, over in the same old place.'

'What'll he take for them?'

'Oh, you can have them for a pound apiece, and chance what's in them,' pronounced Ivy. 'Dad doesn't reckon to keep anything over six months.'

'It's eight since they went out.'

'Nobody'll ever see one of the three again,' was Ivy's considered opinion. 'Nor we won't see our money.'

Larne, taking no particular notice of her, had passed, with his long, gold-miner's stride, over to the far end of the store, and from a raffle of copra

sacks, mattock heads, and general unsorted small gear was pulling forth the three painted canvas bags left in Spence's charge by three of his bad debtors. They were not very heavy; he tucked two under his right arm, threw one across the store on to the counter, where it slid and hung, and turned to Ivy with a curious sparkle in his topaz eyes. In another moment the girl found herself circled by Sid's free left arm, kissed a little carelessly, and set down upon the one chair the store contained. Sid was out and in the blazing street again before she recovered herself enough to spring to her feet and glance round, in order to see if her father——

No. That quick thinker, Sid, had somehow made time to sweep her, with his capable left arm, a little way along the counter, just out of range of the inner doorway. There were no customers, and the boys didn't count.

Ivy sat down again and stared very hard at the view, which consisted of a coral roadway, white as salt, two verdigris green paw-paws, and the Spence jetty, running into a Reckitt's-blue, still sea. She did not see anything of what she looked at. She saw Sid Larne's light, mocking eyes, hard as gems, so close to hers that the lashes brushed her cheek. She felt his lips, their swift firm touch——

Questions, comparisons, impulses, went crackling through her mind like sparks from a dynamo. A girl can do much thinking in ten seconds. It took less than that for Ivy to decide that Sid wasn't in love with her—yet—but that he was very near it. That she was a dutiful daughter, and ought to act as dad had instructed her. That it didn't matter a bit what good thing Sid might have got up his sleeve; she had no proof of any beyond a mere something-tells-me-so impression. That she had him in her hand, and she wouldn't open it.

But when old fat Spence asked her, in a wheezy

voice, what Larne had said, she only answered, 'Bought them three swags, dad; we're well rid of them for three pounds.'

Larne came again in the afternoon, and his face was, as Ivy expressed it to herself, 'all shut up'. She had not served in a Papuan store without learning just what it meant when you couldn't read a miner's face. But when he told her he was leaving by the next schooner, if Spence would care to grub-stake him again, she denied her knowledge to herself, and hastily prepared a little speech in which she meant to explain her father's excellent reasons for turning down the request. She opened her lips to repeat it; it began: 'I'm awful sorry, Sid, but dad asked me to say he isn't grub-staking anybody at present; he's had too many losses, if you know what I mean.' What she heard coming out of her mouth was:

'Certainly, Mr. Larne, that'll be all right. Will you take the stuff now?'

'Lord God!' she said to herself afterwards, in her small iron bedroom. 'I must 'a been off my rocker!'

She was only eighteen after all.

When the schooner had left, she sat in the iron bedroom and cried—at safe times. Her only consolation was that if Sid did come back with 'a good shammy' he would probably be easier to marry. Upon this she decided that *crêpe de Chine* was the only possible thing, and that picture hats were all very well, but a veil was more like it, somehow. She found, in these reflections, strength to go on with her accounts and her typewriting; to endure alone—because girls were cats, and, anyhow, you never knew—the silence, the strain, the fears, that have been endured by so many women, for so many men, in the cruel land of Papua.

The worst of it all was the knowledge that

'anything', if it happened—she never gave clearer definition to her fears—would be her own fault.

Over Sid Larne the forest had closed like a wave.

There was no more Port Moresby, no more Samarai. There were no white men, no houses, no decent food, decently eaten. There were no short nights spent in care-free, delicious sleep. Instead, there were days of hard travel; nights—very long—when one slept a little, as much as one dared, and woke and woke again, to lie still on the slung-sack hammock and listen. One did not listen with ears alone. There would have been little use in that, since rain often fell the night through with a determined, steady roar that drowned all other sound. One listened with one's body, as a deaf man does, to catch, with tautened nerves, the tiny thrill of a touch on the tent roof, the barely sensed slow beat that came, not from one's own heart, as one might think, but from a loitering, murderous foot outside.

And one did not hear either. And so far, so good; one was getting along—right off the known explored country, well into the unknown. And days when a north-west storm came down from the virgin heights of the ranges, making a great pothor away up in the tops of the forest, and flooding the rivers, so that one had to camp and wait, one sat at the V-shaped opening of the fly, turning over and studying certain things one had found in three swags that had belonged to three Bad Debts.

Larne had found nothing in the swags—apparently—to repay the sacrifice of almost his last ready money. That was natural. Spence was a man of business enough to secure himself by putting Bad Debts' valuables away in his safe till such time as it became entirely safe to use them. The white, torn duck-clothes belonging to a Bad Debt, his ties, his



brown boots for wear in Port Moresby, his packets of home letters and envelopes full of photographs, were nobody's concern in particular, provided the Intestate Estates didn't poke its Governmental nose into the business. A pound or so for those was clear gain. Nobody save Larne would have given the money, and Larne only because the three Bad Debts had been, in the strong, Australian sense of the word, his mates.

That was how Spence figured it out, with some share of reason. There was, however, one figure wanting in the sum. Spence had not noticed—would not have troubled about, if he had noticed—an envelope stamped by the Dead Letter Office which was in one of the swags. It had lain there since the post office sent it up, a day after the owner left for the Laka field. It had never been opened till Larne, with cool common sense, opened it himself.

Harper, the writer, had done just what Larne, knowing him, guessed he would do. He had written to a friend in Sydney telling him where he meant to go, and how long it would be before he could hear from him again. The letter was cautious enough; it would not have conveyed information to any one save a miner. But Larne was one of the miners, and he read between the lines. He knew where the man had gone. And he knew—or so he thought—why the three swags had lain in Spence's store all those long months.

What he did not know was the reason for the return of the letter, but he guessed that the man, being, like Harper, a wanderer, had simply gone off, leaving no address. It didn't matter. The main thing was that he had got his clue.

Of a wet day—not of an evening; one does not sit up by the light of a betraying lantern in unknown Papua—Larne was used to re-read the letter, and

turn over some few trifles belonging to one or other of the Bad Debts which he had brought away with him. 'His boss-boy, a tall Tufi—who wore for all clothing a leaf, a dried hand hung like a locket, and a long tail of red fibre meant to imitate the train of a bird of paradise—worried Larne to give him some of these.

'*Taubada* (chief), you give me one tofacco-fipe,' he demanded. 'Free tofacco fipe you havem. Man he no smokem free.'

'No fear,' was all Larne's answer. 'I want the lot.'

'What name you wantem free tofacco fipe?'

Larne's gem-hard eyes seemed to contract like a cat's. He said nothing. The savage, watching, was vaguely pleased, insomuch that he felt moved to cut a branch of ebony wood and shape an entirely unnecessary spear. He also sang a little. If you had asked him why, this son of the Stone Age would have told you that he did not know, and would have thought he was speaking truth.

It was after long travel that the thing happened, the thing for which, 'behind the ranges', one always waits. Larne was not asleep; he was not even in his bunk. He was out in the wet dark, feeling his way round the sentries, and cracking them one by one over the head with a lump of kassi-kassi wood to make them wake up. It took him a good while to creep round the camp; by the time he had done, the least possible light of grey was beginning to make itself felt among the massed tops of the trees. You could not say it was day yet, even that it was dawn; you only knew that dawn was somewhere about, and would not be long coming.

This is the hour of peril. Larne knew it well. He had his revolver ready in his belt for any need. Something—some undefined sense, developed by bush-life—warned him that need was near. He

pulled the big 44 from its holster, cocked it with a click, and tried to look about him. There was a shade more grey among the tree-tops; faint chill of dawn touched his heat-soaked body. He thought he could see, dark on the dark, something moving.

It was just where a carrier had been, and Larne hesitated to shoot. The moment of indecision was fatal. A nauseating dull thump told him that the enemy had struck first. He fired. All the carriers sprang to their feet but one; he lay with his skull cracked like an egg, and the rest ran over him. Light was coming now. Larne fired again, with his back against an immense, dusky tree-trunk. 'I wish to God I had the gun,' was his thought. While he thought it the glade filled with screaming fiends, black silhouettes that waved black clubs and tomahawks, that streamed with black feathers in the grey of dawn.

Larne had four shots left. He fired into the mass of the men, and by luck dropped two. He saw them stagger. One fell backward; one seemed to shut up and fall into himself. There was some loud shouting from a single voice overtopping the rest, and then the crowd of devilish shades swept round and lost itself in the bush, chasing the flying carriers.

Almost in a moment light began to fall from the top of the clearing. The noise of pursuit died off. It was green and still, and a bird in the high trees was singing.

Larne, looking about him, ventured from the shelter of the trunk. His carrier lay a little way off, dead. One savage lay dead beside him. The other was jerking feebly. Larne shot him through the head.

He reloaded the empty chambers of his revolver then and went over to his fly. It seemed they had not touched that. His prompt defence had driven them off—for the time. But the worst misfortune

that can befall a Papuan traveller had befallen him. The carriers were gone.

Calmly—for what was the use of making a fuss?—he searched through his stores, loaded himself with a rifle, a little food, and a good many cartridges, put Harper's letter and the three tobacco pipes in his pocket, and set out on what he knew, under ordinary conditions, to be a fifty to one chance of reaching the coast. He knew also that he was making it a hundred to one chance by keeping on his original route. But he took all hazards.

He was sure—quite sure—that the three Bad Debts had found what would pay their debts over and over again before they met that which it seemed they had met, and gone no farther. He knew vaguely where the gold lay that no one had succeeded in reaching. A day or two on and it was a certainty. Only the Kabari tribe, and the terrible, unknown ranges behind which they lived, had barred it away so far.

Well, the Kabari had got a bit of a lesson, treacherous cowards that they were. He hoped he'd have the luck to teach them another. He did not disguise from himself the fact that only a stupendous slice of luck could put it in his power to do so.

As he laid the camp behind him, and struck through the forest, taking his bearings by the compass he always carried, he thought, in a sidewise flash of his busy mind, that Ivy Spence's kiss was very sweet.

There had been no sign of the carriers.

Larne had not expected to see any of them again; nevertheless, he had hoped a little. Carriers did run away when they got the chance; the Kabari did make a practice of slaughtering strange natives as well as white men; but one or two might have survived. Even one would have been invaluable.

It was having no one to keep watch with you that broke you up. To go all day, and keep more or less awake at night, was too much. That is, would be too much—soon. He did not know how soon, because he did not know now how long he had been going.

The compass was a terrible loss, and he didn't even know where he had dropped it. His head was not quite clear about several things. The Kabari River, for instance—how was it that a river could get lost? A river wasn't tired out. A river could run all day and all night without sleeping for years. But it was lost; it did not know where it was, and it hadn't a notion where he was. Stupid river, idle devil of a river. It was like the carriers—doing it on purpose, because it knew it would have to work when he found it; it would have to carry him down to the sea. So it stayed lost. Idle devil of a——No, he had said that before.

The sun in the long, burned grass, that rose far above his head, was intolerable. There was a sort of track here. A good bush-man could not miss it in the dark. He would go to sleep until sunset, hide in some untrodden part of the grass and do a few miles after nightfall. Night was safer than day, for travel. The cannibal savage seldom wanders about in full darkness. Dawn is his hour.

It was only a minute—surely?—till he opened his eyes again. But in that minute noon had darkened to starlight, with thin, floating clouds. Yes, it was night; a cool night, a good dark night. One could do a few miles of the track before morning came and drove one back into the bush. There was a last tin of meat to open. Larne opened it, and fed sparsely, bridling hunger, before he started. Wonderful how much better one felt—how much clearer and more sensible—after a sleep and a feed.

With eyes dilated by dark, he saw the path quite plain. He followed it, walking as softly as he might, and putting down his feet with care; one had always to remember the chance of spiked pitfalls. Some hours now, some miles. The air smelled fresh, like water; the track inclined ever so little downward. Was it possible that he was going to strike the river after all?

A grey opening in front. Not the river. Not a village; one would see the roofs. Not a garden; he could glimpse no fences. What on earth was it? Clearing of some sort; long, narrow. The track led to it; was well beaten, too. He'd better try—Lord, what was that smell?

Even in asking himself the question he knew what the smell was. He shook his shoulders—a way he had when confronted with things he didn't like—and went, as he always went when things he didn't like were in the way, sharp ahead.

Beneath the clearer sky there was some light—the light that never quite deserts a tropic night, unless black storm is gathering. Slowly things took shape. Larne saw trees ranged on each side of a narrow valley clearing; they seemed to float in the grey sky as seaweed floats in water. His bush-trained eyes, staring, saw more. They saw that some of the lines of the trees were wrong—stiff, angled.

He went ahead. He was under the trees. Nothing. Nobody there. He stopped and listened intently, holding his breath. There was no sound, but something near him stirred in a puff of wind, and he felt a touch on his cheek.

He struck hard, but the thing evaded him. He snatched and caught it. It was a hand, cold as meat.

The nerves of the Papuan miner are chrome steel. Larne neither fled nor fainted. He swore softly under his breath and felt the hand; followed it up to the arm. At the shoulder-joint the limb ended.

Moving, he felt again in the air above his head. A chill, stiff foot, with nails like stones, met his warm fingers. Flesh, cut and jointed; a human ham, a head or two, he encountered as he walked slowly, feeling. More limbs. A whole body now—a body that was hard and dried. ‘Yes, sun-cured,’ he thought, and ran his hand up the hanging limbs. Suddenly a great oath burst from him. He had not used matches hitherto, since he knew well that it was dangerous to advertise his presence; but now he dragged the box out of his ripped trousers pocket and struck a light.

In the thin flicker he saw a man’s body, dry, naked, yellow-white. The head had a long, pointed beard. There was no left arm from the elbow. Larne held the match closer. The stump was that of an old, healed amputation.

He remembered well the very day, four years ago, when Jimmy Harper had blown his arm off with dynamite on the Misima field. He had helped to tie the arteries, so that they could get Jimmy away on a boat for Samarai with a chance for life. He had lived. Now he had died—how?

No torture. That was luck for poor Jimmy. Larne’s second match showed him a gulf in the dried, hairy scalp. ‘Smashed in first thing,’ he thought. ‘I reckon they’re drying him to smoke for bacon later on.’ He was reckless now; cold, inarticulate fury made him tremble, as those sinister fragments above his head were trembling in the wind of the main range. Match after match he struck, and saw things that strung him to a pitch of tense determination such as few men touch in the course of life. He could have fought the whole tribe of Kabari, and died happy beneath a hundred slain. He could have flung them one by one into a firepit, and stood to drink their agony.

The last thing that he saw was the brown hand

and arm of a native, tattooed, white-man fashion, with stars and anchors. He recognized the marks that his boss-boy had been so proud of, and knew why he had not found his carriers.

‘Larder Valley,’ he said, as the match went out. ‘By God, I never thought the yarn was true. No one did. They’ll know it is by and by. But first of all I’ve got to fix these devils.’

He had not the slightest doubt that he would live to do it—live to tell of it too. Sid Larne was the quickest thinker in the country, and in the very moment of his recognizing Harper’s body he had decided just what he was going to do.

No one, after all, had noticed the matches. The valley, with its grisly company, remained as he had found it, dark and still, while he carefully unloosed Harper’s dried body from the tree and carried it away. In a deep brake of bush he hid it, and then set to work by starlight over certain curious jobs.

With a small, sharp penknife he trimmed his beard to a point. He straightened carefully the frame of a pair of spectacles, bent and glassless, that he had found clinging mockingly to Harper’s dead face. The old chap, he remembered, had been a bit grey; where was that heap of ashes? There, under his feet. A little rubbed in his hair, on his beard. Now the frame of the spectacles, fitted on his face. His clothes would do; all miners wore the same. Now the last job.

Carefully he tied up his left arm as beggars do, making a convincing stump of it, if one did not see through the sleeve. He had, luckily, kept his sleeves fairly whole by rolling them up all day; one needed them of nights, when the mosquitoes got about. Was that all? Yes. The resemblance would carry him through; even among white men, who knew each other’s faces, he would have passed at a little



distance. He remembered that most people had thought him rather like Harper, anyhow, though younger.

The last thing was to climb into a tree, shelter himself among thick branches, and wait for dawn.

It was full daylight before any one visited Larder Valley, and Larne had leisure to examine from his high, hidden seat the infamous spot that many men had spoken of, few believed in, and none who had seen come back to tell about. The place was not so very big in daylight—a mere chine of the ranges, with tall, branchy trees on each side. It had been cleared of stumps in the middle and a circle of flat stones had been set on the grass. Larne knew that circle; it was a cannibal feasting-ring. All down the valley were white and black ashes of fires, with here and there piles of firewood. On almost every tree hung joints of human meat, severed and dressed with skill, and slung up well out of the way of marauding dogs or pigs. Harper's body had had a tree to itself, he noted; its absence made a gap. Larne thought his age and toughness had saved his remains from the 'cooking-pot'; it was plain, from the two heads triumphantly stuck on a projecting bough, that the other whites had made a hideous feast. What had preceded the feast he dared not think.

He waited, stroking his gun. He might miss people, or wing them, in the midst of a wild attack in the half-dark; but give him daylight and a steady aim and Sid Larne knew himself that rare thing—a perfect shot.

And the Kabari, lounging—dirty, sleepy, with streaked paint and torn plumes—into the Larder Valley after sunrise, knew it, too, ere they had time to realize what was happening. Four of them Larne, with set teeth, picked off before they even saw where the shots were coming from. Four more went down

while they were bunching together, trying to pluck up courage for an attack. And then, without waiting, he slid down from his tree and charged them.

They had already noticed the absence of the white man's corpse, and were superstitiously troubled about it. They were terrified by the sudden, mysterious slaughter of eight men, even while they guessed that it must be the work of a single opponent. And when the white man whom they had killed weeks ago, and hung up in a tree, came charging down upon them alive and furious, spectacles, beard, short arm, and all, they broke and fled, screaming like lost souls.

Larne was left alone in the valley, with the dead meat swinging in the trees, and the tainted wind blowing through.

He was quite cool. He knew he was going to get away all right. Up there in the tree-top he had seen that the river, after all, was not half a mile distant, and that there were canoes along its banks. But first, he had something to do.

For a few minutes he busied himself with a small parcel that he took out of his pocket, working awkwardly with one hand, and bending down towards the ground. Then he straightened up to go, and, in the act of going, stopped dead.

'My—sainted—aunt!' he said. Larne never swore when surprised, only when he was angry. He had seen something now that surprised him very much.

There was a long spear beside one of the corpses lying on the ground. The spear was pointed, as Papuan spears sometimes—not often—are, with a bit of metal; a pure, natural fragment, beaten into shape. Yellow was the colour of this metal, and it shone. It was about as big as the top half of a man's smallest finger. When Larne picked it up, the whole great spear sagged and slipped down in his hand,

weighted by the little point. And his heart turned over within him, for he knew it was gold.

With huge strides he went up the valley again; the gold-miner's fever was on him; he would have thrown away his life, and the lives of a dozen more, to wrest the secret of the gold from these cruel, unknown wilds. But luck was with Larne this trip. He had not gone a hundred yards before he struck a creek, clearly tributary to the Kabari River, which cried out in every inch of it, to his miner's eyes, that it was gold-bearing. It scarcely needed the sight of a hole rudely scratched in the dry bed of the stream, with nuggets lying loose—disregarded—about its edge, to convince him that he was right.

Never in his life had he done a harder thing than he did when he filled his pockets and left the place without even an attempt to wash out a hatful of gravel in the lower reaches of the stream. The thought of abandoning that treasure-house made him sick. But remembrance, long dormant, now suddenly, mysteriously, awaked—of a girl with a plain, passionate face and piled, dark hair; of a strawberry-smooth cheek beneath his careless lips—came back to him, and dominated his actions. Safety first! Now that one knew, a fresh expedition, with plenty of armed carriers, would do it for certain. Harper and his mates had discovered the place; that was plain. The Papuan would never have known enough to find the nugget with which he had pointed his spear. Harper and the rest had gone mad, washing out nuggets in the bed of the creek, and, of course, they had been caught. They couldn't help themselves. He could.

As he walked, with his magazine rifle, fresh-loaded, in the crook of his arm, down the track that led to the river and the canoes—walked slowly, calmly, looking to left and right—the Kabari, twittering in and out of the trees, hopping and

dancing in nervous excitement, as the true cannibal does dance, seemed wrought up to a pitch that might topple them anywhere—into fresh murder, into mad flight, into the temporary madness that seizes these strange people. Larne knew it; knew that the wonder of his supposed ghostliness was wearing thin; that any moment might bring true understanding. Nevertheless he walked slowly, keeping his rifle ready. They began to follow him by and by, skipping after him in a mad, motley crowd, with their feathers flying and their anklets and armlets of grass fluttering. Some of them slipped off into the bush. Larne knew they had not run away.

The river! As he had dreamed of it, broad and cool, tea-green, streaked with foamy lines that showed its speed. The river that would bring him down to the sea in days, instead of weeks; that would save his life for him, if it didn't beat him to bones in some unknown rapid or waterfall.

Open, under the sky; no treachery, no lurking; the noble river.

Two, three canoes. Could he spare the shots? He must.

Bullets had been dum-dummed. They mush-roomed out where they struck. Before the Kabari realized what he was doing he had made their two war-canoes unseaworthy for at least an hour, even as he ran down to the water-edge where the small, handy canoe that was used for river crossings lay ready. Larne could paddle well. He was out of sight round the bend before the yelling, furious Kabari had got the first of their canoes pushed into the water, with the strength of the whole village behind it. Overloaded as it was, it went down almost at once. The savages, cheated, and knowing it now, stood in the shallow water and screamed with rage.

Back in the valley three dead Kabari lay with three white men's pipes stuck in their grinning teeth. There was a bit of bark beside them, scribbled on by a fire-stick. Sheer bravado on the part of Larne, for it was not till the Kabari field had opened up months after that any one was able to read on it, roughly written in charcoal from the cooking-fires:

*'Put that in your pipe and smoke it.'*

There is one more red circle in old Spence's ledger, bringing to life one made Bad Debt.

Ivy Spence was married in crêpe de Chine.

*Note.*—Larder Valley existed in the Northern Division of Papua early in the present century, and was seen by several white men.





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